



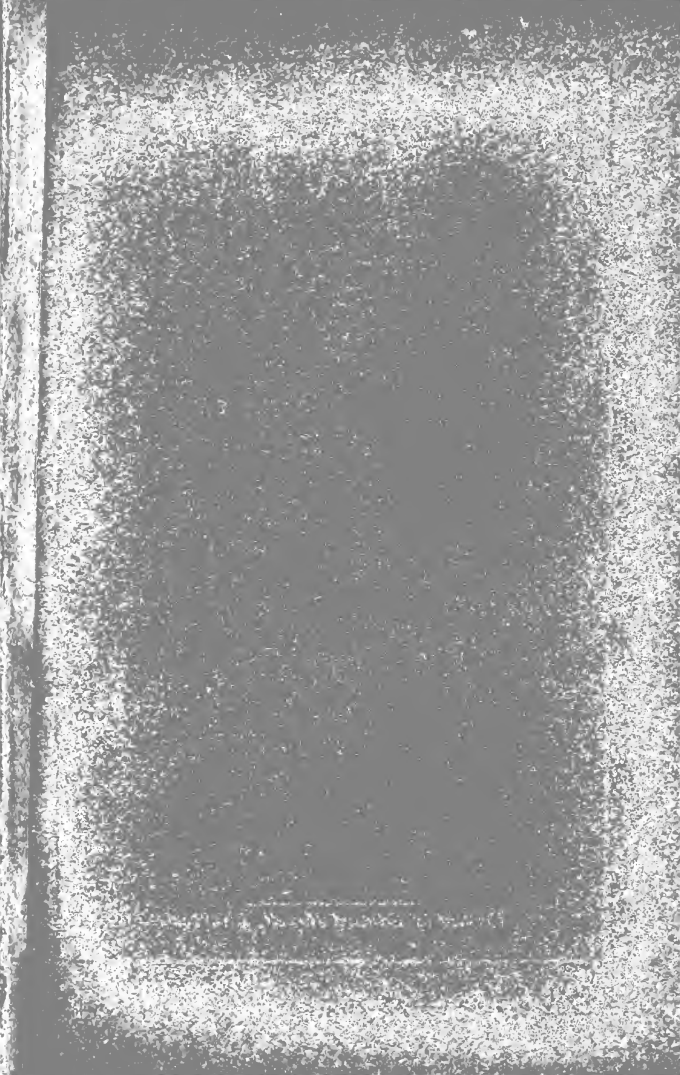
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GOOD THOUGHTS IN BAD TIMES

GOOD THOUGHTS IN WORSE TIMES

MIXT CONTEMPLATIONS
IN BETTER TIMES

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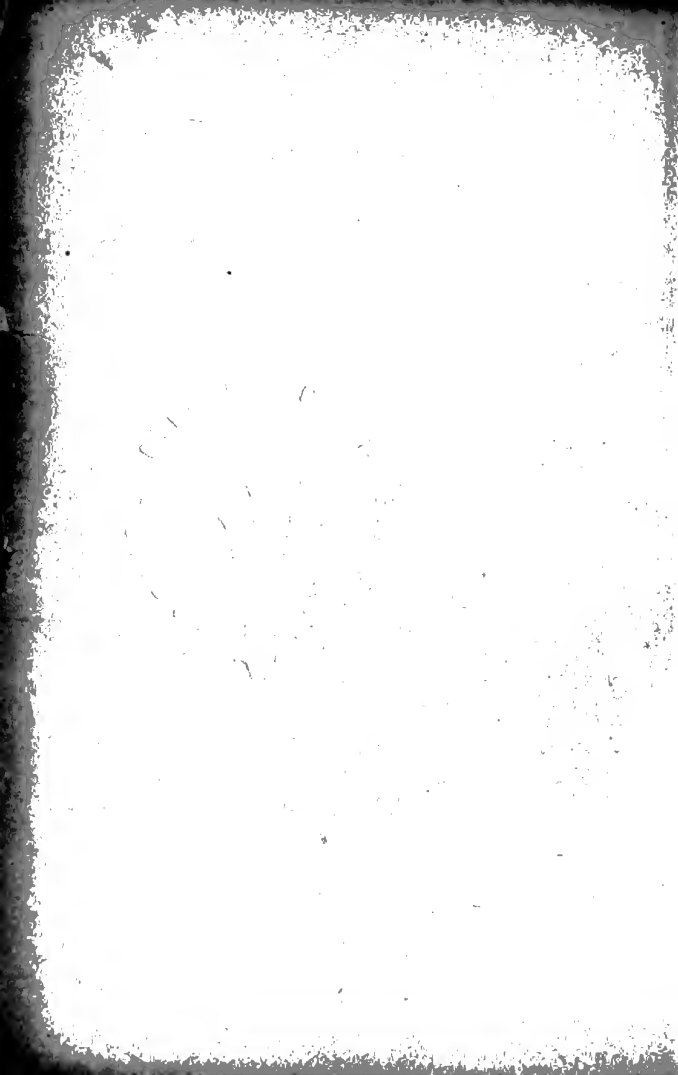
GOOD THOUGHTS IN BAD TIMES
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BY THOMAS FULLER D.D.



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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE LADY DALKEITH,
LADY GOVERNESS TO HER HIGHNESS
THE PRINCESS HENRIETTA.



MADAM,—It is unsafe in these dangerous days for any to go abroad without a convoy, or, at the least, a pass: my book hath both in being dedicated to your honour. The apostle saith, Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?*

* 1 Cor. ix. 7.

am one of your honour's planting, and could heartily wish, that the fruit I bring forth were worthy to be tasted by your judicious palate. Howsoever, accept these grapes, if not for their goodness, for their novelty: though not sweetest relished, they are soonest ripe, being the first fruits of Exeter press, presented unto you. And if ever my ingratitude should forget my obligations to your honour, these black lines will turn red, and blush his unworthiness that wrote them. In this pamphlet your ladyship shall praise whatsoever you are pleased but to pardon. But I am tedious, for your honour can spare no more minutes from looking on a better book, her infant highness, committed to your charge. Was ever more hope of worth in a less volume? But O! how excellently will the same, in due time, be set forth, seeing the paper is so pure, and your ladyship

the overseer to correct the press! The continuance and increase of whose happiness here, and hereafter, is desired in his daily devotions, who resteth

Your honour's in all

Christian service,

THOMAS FULLER.

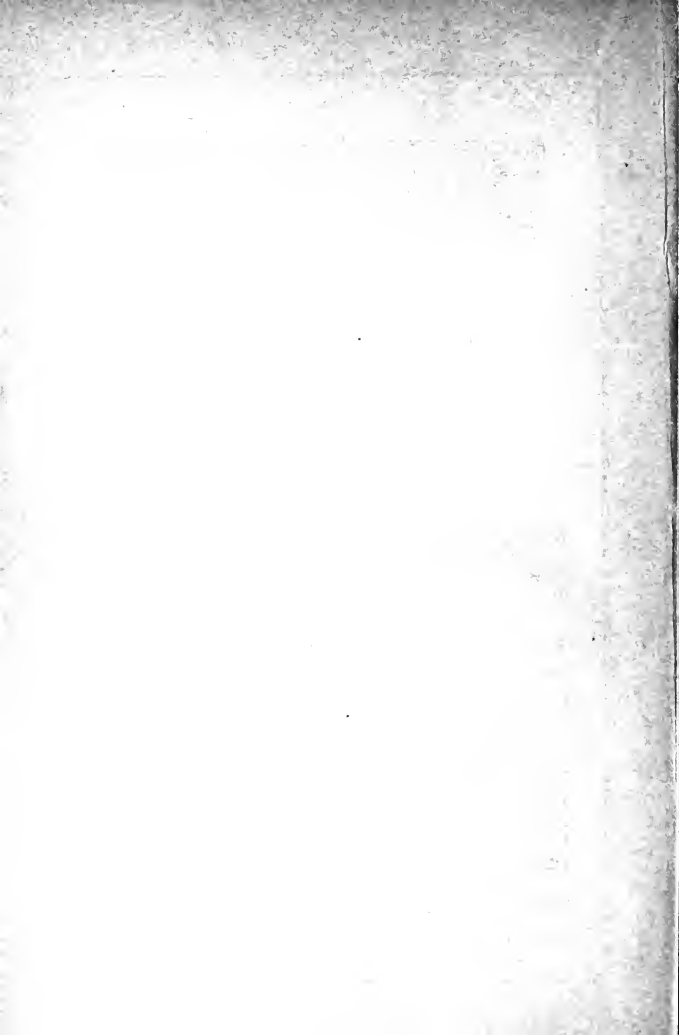




GOOD THOUGHTS

IN

BAD TIMES.





Personal Meditations.



I.

LORD,—How near was I to danger, yet escaped! I was upon the brink of the brink of it, yet fell not in; they are well kept who are kept by thee. Excellent archer! Thou didst hit thy mark in missing it, as meaning to fright, not hurt me. Let me not now be such a fool as to pay my thanks to blind Fortune for a favour which the eye of Providence hath bestowed upon me. Rather let the narrowness of my escape make my thankfulness to thy goodness the larger, lest my ingratitude justly

cause, that whereas this arrow but hit my hat, the next pierce my head.

II.

LORD,—When thou shalt visit me with a sharp disease, I fear I shall be impatient, for I am choleric by my nature, and tender by my temper, and have not been acquainted with sickness all my lifetime. I cannot expect any kind usage from that which hath been a stranger unto me. I fear I shall rave and rage. Oh whither will my mind sail, when distemper shall steer it? whether will my fancy run, when diseases shall ride it? My tongue, which of itself is a fire,* sure will be a WILDFIRE, when the furnace of my mouth is made seven times hotter with a burning fever. But, Lord, though I should talk idly to my own shame, let me not talk wickedly to thy dishonour. Teach me the art of patience whilst I am well, and give me

* James iii. 6.

the use of it when I am sick. In that day either lighten my burden or strengthen my back. Make me, who so often, in my health, have discovered my weakness presuming on my own strength, to be strong in sickness when I solely rely on thy assistance.

III.

LORD,—This morning my unseasonable visiting of a friend, disturbed him in the midst of his devotions: unhappy to hinder another man's goodness. If I myself build not, shall I snatch the axe and hammer from him that doth? Yet I could willingly have wished, that rather than he should then have cut off the cable of his prayers, I had twisted my cord to it, and had joined with him in his devotions; however, to make him the best amends I may, I now request of thee for him, whatsoever he would have requested for himself. Thus he shall be no loser, if thou be pleased to hear my

prayer for him, and to hearken to our Saviour's intercession for us both.

IV.

LORD,—Since these woeful wars began, one, formerly mine intimate acquaintance, is now turned a stranger, yea, an enemy. Teach me how to behave myself towards him. Must the new foe quite jostle out the old friend? May I not with him continue some commerce of kindness? Though the amity be broken on his side, may not I preserve my counterpart entire? Yet how can I be kind to him, without being cruel to myself and thy cause? Oh guide my shaking hand, to draw so small a line straight; or rather, because I know not how to carry myself towards him in this controversy, even be pleased to take away the subject of the question, and speedily to reconcile these unnatural differences.

V.

LORD,—My voice by nature is harsh and untunable, and it is vain to lavish any art to better it. Can my singing of psalms be pleasing to thy ears, which is unpleasant to my own? yet, though I cannot chant with the nightingale, or chirp with the blackbird, I had rather chatter with the swallow,* yea, rather croak with the raven, than be altogether silent. Hadst thou given me a better voice, I would have praised thee with a better voice. Now what my music wants in sweetness, let it have in sense, singing praises with † understanding. Yea, Lord, create in me a new heart, (therein to make melody,) ‡ and I will be contented with my old voice, until, in thy due time, being admitted into the choir of heaven, I have another, more harmonious, bestowed upon me.

* Isaiah xxxviii. 14.

† Psalm xlvi. 7.

‡ Ephes. v. 19.

VI.

LORD,—Within a little time I have heard the same precept in sundry places, and by several preachers, pressed upon me. The doctrine seemeth to haunt my soul, whithersoever I turn it meets me. Surely this is from thy providence, and should be for my profit. Is it because I am an ill proficient in this point, that I must not turn over a new leaf, but am still kept to my old lesson : Peter was grieved because our Saviour said unto him, the third time, lovest thou me? * But I will not be offended at thy often inculcating the same precept. But rather conclude, that I am much concerned therein, and that it is thy pleasure, that the nail should be soundly fastened in me which thou hast knocked in with so many hammers.

VII.

LORD,—Before I commit a sin it seems

* John xxi. 13.

to me so shallow, that I may wade through it dry-shod from any guiltiness : but when I have committed it, it often seems so deep that I cannot escape without drowning. Thus I am always in the extremities : either my sins are so small that they need not my repentance, or so great that they cannot obtain thy pardon. Lend me, O Lord, a reed out of thy sanctuary, truly to measure the dimension of my offences. But oh ! as thou revealest to me more of my misery, reveal also more of thy mercy ; lest if my wounds, in my apprehension, gape wider than thy tents, my soul run out at them. If my badness seem bigger than thy goodness, but one hair's breadth, but one moment, that is room and time enough for me to run to eternal despair.

VIII.

LORD,—I do discover a fallacy, whereby I have long deceived myself. Which is this : I have desired to begin my amend-

ment from my birthday, or from the first day of the year, or from some eminent festival, that so my repentance might bear some remarkable date. But when those days were come, I have adjourned my amendment to some other time. Thus, whilst I could not agree with myself when to start, I have almost lost the running of the race. I am resolved thus to befool myself no longer. I see no day to to-day, the instant time is always the fittest time. In Nebuchadnezzar's* image, the lower the members, the coarser the metal; the farther off the time, the more unfit. To-day is the golden opportunity, to-morrow will be the silver season, next day but the brazen one, and so long, till at last I shall come to the toes of clay, and be turned to dust. Grant therefore that to-day I may hear thy voice.† And if this day be obscure in the calendar, and remarkable in itself for nothing else, give me to make it memorable in my soul thereupon, by thy

* Dan. ii. 33.

† Psalm xciv. 7.

assistance, beginning the reformation of my life.

IX.

LORD,—I saw one, whom I knew to be notoriously bad, in great extremity. It was hard to say whether his former wickedness or present want were the greater; if I could have made the distinction, I could willingly have fed his person, and starved his profaneness. This being impossible, I adventured to relieve him. For I know that amongst many objects, all of them being in extreme miseries, charity, though shooting at random, cannot miss a right mark. Since, Lord, the party, being recovered, is become worse than ever before (thus they are always impaired with affliction, who thereby are not improved :) Lord, count me not accessory to his badness, because I relieved him. Let me not suffer harm in myself, for my desire to do good to him. Yea, Lord, be pleased to clear my credit amongst men, that they

may understand my hands according to the simplicity of my heart. I gave to him only in hope, to keep the stock alive, that so afterwards it might be better grafted. Now, finding myself deceived, my alms shall return into my own bosom.

X.

LORD,—Thy servants are now praying in the church, and I am here staying at home, detained by necessary occasions, such as are not of my seeking but of thy sending, my care could not prevent them, my power could not remove them. Wherefore, though I cannot go to church, there to sit down at table with the rest of thy guests, be pleased, Lord, to send me a dish of their meat hither, and feed my soul with holy thoughts. Eldad* and Medad, though staying still in the camp, (no doubt on just cause,) yet prophesied as well as the other elders. Though they went not out to the Spirit, the Spirit came home to them. Thus

* Numb. xi. 26.

never any dutiful child lost his legacy for being absent at the making of his father's will, if at the same time he were employed about his father's business. I fear too many at church have their bodies there, and minds at home. Behold, in exchange, my body here and heart there. Though I cannot pray with them I pray for them. Yea, this comforts me, I am with thy congregation, because I would be with it.

XI.

LORD,—I trust thou hast pardoned the bad examples I have set before others, be pleased also to pardon me the sins which they have committed by my bad examples. (It is the best manners in thy court, to heap requests upon requests.) If thou hast forgiven my sins, the children of my corrupt nature, forgive me my grandchildren also. Let not the transcripts remain, since thou hast blotted out the original. And for the time to come, bless me with barrenness in bad actions, and

my bad actions with barrenness in procreation, that they may never beget others according to their likeness.

XII.

LORD,—What faults I correct in my son, I commit myself: I beat him for dabbling in the dirt, whilst my own soul doth wallow in sin: I beat him for crying to cut his own meat, yet am not myself contented with that state thy providence hath carved unto me! I beat him for crying when he is to go to sleep, and yet I fear I myself shall cry when thou callest me to sleep with my fathers. Alas! I am more childish than my child, and what I inflict on him, I justly deserve to receive from thee: only here is the difference: I pray and desire that my correction on my child may do him good; it is in thy power, Lord, to effect that thy correction on me shall do me good.

XIII.

LORD,—I perceive my soul deeply guilty of envy. By my good will, I would have none prophesy but mine own * Moses. I had rather thy work were undone, than done better by another than by myself: had rather that thine enemies were all alive, than that I should kill but my thousand, and others their ten thousands of them. My corruption repines at other men's better parts, as if what my soul wants of them in substance she would supply in swelling. Dispossess me, Lord, of this bad spirit, and turn my envy into holy emulation. Let me labour to exceed them in pains, who excel me in parts, and knowing that my sword, in cutting down sin, hath a duller edge, let me strike with the greater force; yea, make other men's gifts to be mine, by making me thankful to thee for them. It was some comfort to Naomi, that wanting a son herself, she

* Numb. xi. 28.

brought up Ruth's child in her bosom.* If my soul be too old to be a mother of goodness, Lord, make it but a drynurse. Let me feed, and foster, and nourish, and cherish the graces in others, honouring their persons, praising their parts, and glorifying thy name who hath given such gifts unto them.

XIV.

LORD,—When young, I have almost quarrelled with that petition in our Liturgy, give peace in our time, O Lord: needless to wish for light at noon-day; for then peace was so plentiful, no fear of famine, but suspicion of a surfeit thereof. And yet how many good comments was this prayer then capable of! Give peace, that is, continue and preserve it; give peace, that is, give us hearts worthy of it, and thankful for it. In our time, that is, all our time: for there is more besides a fair morning required to make a fair day.

* Ruth iv. 16.

Now I see the mother had more wisdom than her son. The church knew better than I how to pray. Now I am better informed of the necessity of that petition. Yea, with the daughters of the horseleech,* I have need to cry, Give, give peace in our time, O Lord.

XV.

LORD,—Unruly soldiers command poor people to open them their doors, otherwise threatening to break in. But if those in the house knew their own strength, it were easy to keep them out; seeing the doors are threatening-proof, and it is not the breath of their oaths can blow the locks open. Yet silly souls being affrighted, they obey, and betray themselves to their violence. Thus Satan serves me, or rather thus I serve myself. When I cannot be forced I am fooled out of my integrity. He cannot constrain, if I do not consent. If I do but keep possession, all the posse

* *Prov. xxx. 15.*

of hell cannot violently eject me : but I cowardly surrender to his summons. Thus there needs no more to my undoing, but myself.

XVI.

LORD,—When I am to travel, I never used to provide myself till the very time ; partly out of laziness, loth to be troubled till needs I must ; partly out of pride, as presuming all necessaries for my journey will wait upon me at the instant. (Some say this is scholars' fashion, and it seems by following it I hope to approve myself to be one). However, it often comes to pass that my journey is finally stopped, through the narrowness of the time to provide for it. Grant, Lord, that my confessed improvidence in temporal, may make me suspect my providence in spiritual matters. Solomon saith, man goeth to his long home.* Short preparation will not fit so long a journey. Oh let me not

* Eccles. xii. 5.

put it off to the last, to have my oil to buy, when I am to burn it.* But let me so dispose of myself, that when I am to die, I may have nothing to do but to die.

XVII.

LORD,—When in any writing I have occasion to insert these passages, God willing, God lending me life, &c., I observe, Lord, that I can scarce hold my hand from encircling these words in a parenthesis, as if they were not essential to the sentence, but may as well be left out as put in. Whereas, indeed, they are not only of the commission at large, but so of the quorum, that without them all the rest is nothing, wherefore hereafter I will write those words fully and fairly, without any enclosure about them. Let critics censure it for bad grammar, I am sure it is good divinity.

* Matth. xxv. 10.

XVIII.

LORD,—Many temporal matters, which I have desired, thou hast denied me; it vexed me for the present, that I wanted my will; since, considering in cold blood, I plainly perceive had that which I desired been done, I had been undone! Yea, what thou gavest me, instead of those things which I wished, though less toothsome to me, were more wholesome for me. Forgive, I pray, my former anger, and now accept my humble thanks. Lord, grant me one suit, which is this, deny me all suits which are bad for me: when I petition for what is unfitting, oh let the King of heaven make use of his negative voice. Rather let me fast than have quails given with intent that I should be choked in eating them.*

XIX.

LORD,—This day I disputed with my-

* Numb. xi. 33.

self, whether or no I had said my prayers this morning, and I could not call to mind any remarkable passage whence I could certainly conclude that I had offered my prayers unto thee. Frozen affections, which left no spark of remembrance behind them! Yet at last I hardly recovered one token, whence I was assured that I had said my prayers. It seems I had said them, and only said them, rather by heart than with my heart. Can I hope that thou wouldst remember my prayers, when I had almost forgotten that I had prayed? Or rather, have I not cause to fear that thou rememberest my prayers too well, to punish the coldness and badness of them? Alas! are not devotions thus done, in effect left undone? Well, Jacob advised his sons, at their second going into Egypt, take double money in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight.* So, Lord, I come with my second morning sacrifice: be pleased to accept it, which I desire, and endeavour

* Gen. xliii. 12.

to present with a little better devotion than I did the former.

XX.

LORD,—The motions of thy Holy Spirit were formerly frequent in my heart; but, alas! of late they have been great strangers. It seems they did not like their last entertainment, they are so loth to come again. I fear they were grieved,* that either I heard them not attentively, or believed them not faithfully, or practised them not conscionably. If they be pleased to come again, this is all I dare promise, that they do deserve, and I do desire they should be well used. Let thy Holy Spirit be pleased, not only to stand before the door and knock, but also to come in.† If I do not open the door, it were too unreasonable to request such a miracle, to come in when the doors were shut, as thou didst to the apostles.‡ Yet let me humbly beg of thee, that thou

* Ephes. iv. 3.

† Rev. iii. 20.

‡ John xx. 19.

wouldst make the iron gate of my heart open of its own accord.* Then let thy Spirit be pleased to sup in my heart; I have given it an invitation, and I hope I shall give it room. But O thou that sendest the guest, send the meat also; and if I be so unmannerly as not to make the Holy Spirit welcome, O let thy effectual grace make me to make it welcome.

XXI.

LORD,—I confess this morning I remembered my breakfast but forgot my prayers. And as I have returned no praise, so thou mightst justly have afforded me no protection. Yet thou hast carefully kept me to the middle of this day, entrusted me with a new debt before I have paid the old score. It is now noon, too late for a morning, too soon for an evening sacrifice. My corrupt heart prompts me to put off my prayers till night, but I know it too well, or rather

* Acts xii. 10.

too ill, to trust it. I fear if till night I defer them, at night I shall forget them. Be pleased therefore now to accept them. Lord, let not a few hours the later make a breach ; especially seeing (be it spoken not to excuse my negligence but to implore thy pardon) a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday. I promise hereafter by thy assistance to bring forth fruit in due season. See how I am ashamed the sun should shine on me, who now newly start in the race of my devotions, when he like a giant hath run more than half his course in the heavens.

XXII.

LORD,—This day casually I am fallen into a bad company, and know not how I came hither, or how to get hence. Sure I am, not my improvidence hath run me, but thy providence hath led me into this danger. I was not wandering in any base by-path, but walking in the highway of my vocation ; wherefore, Lord, thou that

calledst me hither, keep me here. Stop their mouths that they speak no blasphemy, or stop my ears that I hear none; or open my mouth soberly to reprove what I hear. Give me to guard myself; but, Lord, guard my guarding of myself. Let not the smoke of their badness put out my eyes, but the shining of my innocency lighten theirs. Let me give physic to them, and not take infection from them. Yea, make me the better for their badness. Then shall their bad company be to me like the dirt of oysters, whose mud hath soap in it, and doth rather scour than defile.

XXIII.

LORD,—Often have I thought with myself, I will sin but this one sin more, and then I will repent of it, and of all the rest of my sins together. So foolish was I, and ignorant. As if I should be more able to pay my debts when I owe more: or as if I should say, I will wound my

c

friend once again, and then I will lovingly shake hands with him; but what if my friend will not shake hands with me? Besides, can one commit one sin more, and but one sin more? Unclean creatures went by couples into the ark.* Grant, Lord, at this instant I may break off my badness; otherwise thou mayst justly make the last minute wherein I do sin on earth to be the last minute wherein I shall sin on earth, and the first wherein thou mightst make me suffer in another place.

XXIV.

LORD,—The preacher this day came home to my heart. A left-handed Gibeonite with his sling † hit not the mark more sure than he my darling sins. I could find no fault with his sermon, save only that it had too much truth. But this I quarrelled at, that he went far from his text to come close to me, and so was

* Gen. vii. 2.

† Judges x. 16.

faulty himself in telling me of my faults. Thus they will creep out at small crannies who have a mind to escape; and yet I cannot deny but that that which he spake (though nothing to that portion of Scripture which he had for his text) was according to the proportion of Scripture. And is not thy word in general the text at large of every preacher? Yea, rather I should have concluded, that if he went from his text, thy goodness sent him to meet me; for without thy guidance it had been impossible for him so truly to have traced the intricate turnings of my deceitful heart.

XXV.

LORD,—Be pleased to shake my clay cottage before thou throwest it down. May it totter a while before it doth tumble. Let me be summoned before I am surprised. Deliver me from sudden death. Not from sudden death in respect of itself, for I care not how short my pas-

sage be, so it be safe. Never any weary traveller complained that he came too soon to his journey's end. But let it not be sudden in respect of me. Make me always ready to receive death. Thus no guest comes unawares to him who keeps a constant table.





Scripture Observations.



I.

LORD,—In the parable of the four sorts of ground wherein the seed was sown, the last alone proved fruitful.* There the bad were more than the good; but amongst the servants two improved their talents,† or pounds, and one only buried them.‡ There the good were more than the bad. Again, amongst the ten virgins, five were wise and five foolish:§ there the good and bad were equal. I see that concerning the number of the saints in comparison to the reprobates, no certainty can be collected from these parables. Good reason, for it is not

* Matt. xiii. 8.

† Luke xix. 20.

‡ Matt. xxv. 18.

§ Matt. xxv. 2.

their principal purpose to meddle with that point. Grant that I may never rack a Scripture simile beyond the true intent thereof, lest, instead of sucking milk, I squeeze blood out of it.

II.

LORD,—Thou didst intend from all eternity to make Christ the heir of all. No danger of disinheriting him, thy only Son, and so well-deserving. Yet thou sayest to him, Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,* &c. This homage he must do for thy boon, to beg it. I see thy goodness delights to have thy favours sued for, expecting we should crave what thou intendest we should have; that so, though we cannot give a full price, we may take some pains for thy favours, and obtain them, though not for the merit, by the means of our petitions.

III.

LORD,—I find that Ezekiel is in his

* Psalm ii. 8.

Prophecies styled ninety times, and more, by this appellation, Son of man; and surely not once oftener than there was need for. For he had more visions than any one (not to say than all) of the prophets of his time. It was necessary, therefore, that his mortal extraction should often be sounded in his ears, Son of man, lest his frequent conversing with visions might make him mistake himself to be some angel. Amongst other revelations, it was therefore needful to reveal him to himself, Son of man, lest seeing many visions might have made him blind to spiritual pride. Lord, as thou increasest thy graces in me, and favours on me, so with them daily increase in my soul the monitors and remembrancers of my mortality. So shall my soul be kept in a good temper and humble deportment towards thee.

IV.

LORD,—I read how Jacob (then only accompanied with his staff) vowed at

Bethel, that if thou gavest him but bread and raiment, he would make that place thy house.* After his return, the condition on thy side was over-performed, but the obligation on his part wholly neglected: for when thou hadst made his staff to swell, and to break into two bands, he, after his return, turned purchaser, † bought a field in Shalem, intending there to set up his rest. But thou art pleased to be his remembrancer in a new vision, and to spur him afresh who tired in his promise. Arise, go to Bethel, and make there an altar, ‡ &c. Lord, if rich Jacob forgot what poor Jacob did promise, no wonder if I be bountiful to offer thee in my affliction what I am niggardly to perform in my prosperity. But, oh, take not advantage of the forfeitures, but be pleased to demand payment once again. Pinch me into the remembrance of my promises, that so I may reinforce my old vows with new resolutions.

* Gen. xxviii. 20-22.

† Gen. xxxiii. 19.

‡ Gen. xxxv. 1.

V.

LORD,—I read when our Saviour was examined in the high priest's hall, that Peter stood without, till John (being his spokesman to the maid that kept the door*) procured his admission in. John meant to let him out of the cold, and not to let him into a temptation; but his courtesy in intention proved a mischief in event, and the occasion of his denying his master. Oh, let never my kindness concur in the remotest degree to the damage of my friend. May the chain which I sent him for an ornament never prove his fetters. But if I should be unhappy herein, I am sure thou wilt not punish my good will, but pity my ill success.

VI.

LORD,—The apostle saith to the Corinthians, God will not suffer you to be

* John xviii. 16.

tempted above what you are able.* But how comes he to contradict himself, by his own confession, in his next epistle? Where, speaking of his own sickness, he saith, We were pressed out of measure, above strength. † Perchance this will be expounded by propounding another riddle of the same apostle's; who, praising Abraham, ‡ saith that against hope he believed in hope. That is, against carnal hope he believed in spiritual hope. So the same wedge will serve to cleave the former difficulty. Paul was pressed above his human, not above his heavenly strength. Grant, Lord, that I may not mangle and dismember thy Word, but study it entirely, comparing one place with another. For diamonds only can cut diamonds; and no such comments on the Scripture as the Scripture.

VII.

LORD,—I observe that the Vulgar trans-

* 1 Cor. x. 13.

† 2 Cor. i. 8.

‡ Rom. xxviii.

lation reads the apostle's precept thus: Give diligence to make your calling and election sure by good works.* But in our English Testaments these words, "by good works," are left out. It grieved me at the first to see our translation defective; but it offended me afterwards to see the other redundant. For those words are not in the Greek, which is the original. And it is an ill work to put good works in, to the corruption of the Scripture. Grant, Lord, that though we leave good works out in the text, we may take them into our comment—in that exposition which our practice is to make on this precept in our lives and conversations.

VIII.

LORD,—I find the genealogy of my Saviour † strangely chequered with four remarkable changes in four immediate generations.

* 2 Peter i. 10.

† Matt. i. 7, 8.

1. Roboam begat Abia; that is, a bad father begat a bad son.

2. Abia begat Asa; that is, a bad father a good son.

3. Asa begat Josaphat; that is, a good father a bad son.

4. Josaphat begat Joram; that is, a good father a good son.

I see, Lord, from hence, that my father's piety cannot be entailed; that is bad news for me. But I see also, that actual impiety is not always hereditary; that is good news for my son.

IX.

LORD,—When in my daily service I read David's Psalms, give me to alter the accent of my soul, according to their several subjects. In such psalms wherein he confesseth his sins, or requesteth thy pardon, or praiseth for former, or prayeth for future favours, in all these give me to raise my soul to as high a pitch as may be. But when I come to such psalms

wherein he curseth his enemies, oh, there let me bring my soul down to a lower note. For those words were made only to fit David's mouth. I have the like breath, but not the same spirit to pronounce them. Nor let me flatter myself, that it is lawful for me, with David, to curse thine enemies, lest my deceitful heart entitle all mine enemies to be thine, and so what was religion in David, prove malice in me, whilst I act revenge under the pretence of piety.

X.

LORD,—I read of two witnesses, and when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them.* They could not be killed whilst they were doing, but when they had done their work; during their employment they were invincible. No better armour against the darts of death than to be busied in thy service.

* Rev. xi. 7.

Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? No malice of man can antedate my end a minute, whilst my Maker hath any work for me to do. And when all my daily task is ended, why should I grudge then to go to bed?

XI.

LORD,—I read at the transfiguration that Peter,* James, and John were admitted to behold Christ; but Andrew was excluded. So again at the reviving of the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, † these three were let in, and Andrew shut out. Lastly, in the agony ‡ the aforesaid three were called to be witnesses thereof, and still Andrew left behind. Yet he was Peter's brother, and a good man, and an apostle; why did not Christ take the two pair of brothers? was it not pity to part them? But methinks I seem more offended thereat than Andrew himself was, whom I find to express no discontent, being

* Matt. xvii. 1.

† Mark v. 37.

‡ Mark xiv. 33.

pleased to be accounted a loyal subject for the general, though he was no favourite in these particulars. Give me to be pleased in myself, and thankful to thee, for what I am, though I be not equal to others in personal perfections. For such peculiar privileges are courtesies from thee when given, and no injuries to us when denied.

XII.

LORD,—St Paul teacheth the art of heavenly thrift, how to make a new sermon of an old. Many (saith he) walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ.* Formerly he had told it with his tongue, but now with his tears; formerly he taught it with his words, but now with weeping. Thus new affections make an old sermon new. May I not, by the same proportion, make an old prayer new? Lord, thus long I have offered my prayer dry unto thee, now,

* Philip. iii. 18.

Lord, I offer it wet. Then wilt thou own some new addition therein, when, though the sacrifice be the same, yet the dressing of it is different, being steeped in his tears who bringeth it unto thee.

XIII.

V
LORD,—I read of my Saviour, that when he was in the wilderness, then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.* A great change in a little time. No twilight betwixt night and day. No purgatory condition betwixt hell and heaven, but instantly, when out devil, in angel. Such is the case of every solitary soul. It will make company for itself. A musing mind will not stand neuter a minute, but presently side with legions of good or bad thoughts. Grant, therefore, that my soul, which ever will have some, may never have bad company.

* Matt. iv. 11.

XIV.

LORD,—I read how Cush and Ahimaaz ran a race, who first should bring tidings of victory to David. Ahimaaz, though last setting forth, came first to his journey's end; not that he had the fleetest feet, but the better brains, to choose the way of most advantage. For the text saith, So Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cush.* Prayers made to God by saints fetch a needless compass about. That is but a rough and uneven way. Besides one steep passage therein, questionable whether it can be climbed up, and saints in heaven made sensible of what we say on earth. The way of the plain, or plain way, both shortest and surest, is, Call upon me in the time of trouble. Such prayers, though starting last, will come first to the mark.

* 2 Sam. xviii. 23.

XV.

LORD,—This morning I read a chapter in the Bible, and therein observed a memorable passage, whereof I never took notice before. Why now, and no sooner did I see it? Formerly my eyes were as open, and the letters as legible. Is there not a thin veil laid over thy Word, which is more rarified by reading, and at last wholly worn away? Or was it because I came with more appetite than before? The milk was always there in the breast, but the child till now was not hungry enough to find out the teat. I see the oil of thy Word will never leave increasing whilst any bring an empty barrel. The Old Testament will still be a new Testament to him who comes with a fresh desire for information.

XVI.

LORD,—At the first Passover God kept touch with the Hebrews very punctually :

at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, in the self-same day, it came to pass that all the hosts of the Lord went out of the land of Egypt;* but at the first Easter God was better than his word. Having promised that Christ should lie but three days in the grave, his fatherly affection did run to relieve him. By a charitable synecdoche, two pieces of days were counted for whole ones. God did cut the work short in righteousness. † Thus the measure of his mercy under the law was full, but it ran over in the gospel.

XVII.

LORD,—The apostle dissuadeth the Hebrews from covetousness with this argument, because God said, I will not leave thee nor forsake thee. Yet I find not that God ever gave this promise to all the Jews, but he spake it only to Joshua ‡ when first made commander against the Canaanites; which, without violence to

* Exod. xii. 41.

† Rom ix. 28.

‡ Josh. i. 5.

the analogy of faith, the apostle applieth to all good men in general. Is it so that we are heirs-apparent to all promises made to thy servants in Scripture? Are the characters of grace granted to them good to me? Then will I say with Jacob, I have enough.* But because I cannot entitle myself to thy promises to them, except I imitate their piety to thee, grant I may take as much care in following the one as comfort in the other.

XVIII.

LORD,—I read that thou didst make grass, herbs, and trees the third day.† As for the sun, moon, and stars,‡ thou madest them on the fourth day of the creation. Thus at first thou didst confute the folly of such, who maintain that all vegetables, in their growth, are enslaved to a necessary and unavoidable dependence on the influences of the stars. Whereas plants were

* Gen. xlv. 28.

† Gen. i. 11.

‡ Gen. i. 16.

even when planets were not. It is false that the marigold follows the sun, whereas the sun follows the marigold, as made the day before him. Hereafter I will admire thee more, and fear astrologers less; not affrighted with their doleful predictions of dearth and drought, collected from the complexions of the planets. Must the earth of necessity be sad because some ill-natured star is sullen? as if the grass could not grow without asking it leave. Whereas thy power, which made herbs before the stars, can preserve them without their propitious, yea, against their malignant aspects.

XIX.

LORD,—I read how Paul, writing from Rome, spake to Philemon* to prepare him a lodging, hoping to make use thereof; yet we find not that he ever did use it, being martyred not long after. However, he was no loser whom thou didst lodge

* Philemon, ver. 22.

in a higher mansion in heaven. Let me always be thus deceived to my advantage. I shall have no cause to complain, though I never wear the new clothes fitted for me, if, before I put them on, death clothe me with glorious immortality.

XX.

LORD,—When our Saviour sent his apostles abroad to preach, he enjoined them, in one Gospel, Possess nothing, neither shoes nor staff.* But it is said in another Gospel, And he commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only.† The reconciliation is easy. They might have a staff, to speak them travellers, not soldiers; one to walk with, not to war with; a staff which was a wand, not a weapon. But oh! in how doleful days do we live, wherein ministers are not, as formerly, armed with their nakedness, but need

* Matt. x. 10.

† Mark vi. 8.

staves and swords too to defend them from violence.

XXI.

LORD,—I discover an arrant laziness in my soul. For when I am to read a chapter in the Bible, before I begin it, I look where it endeth. And if it endeth not on the same side, I cannot keep my hands from turning over the leaf to measure the length thereof on the other side; if it swells to many verses, I begin to grudge. Surely my heart is not rightly affected. Were I truly hungry after heavenly food, I would not complain of meat. Scourge, Lord, this laziness out of my soul, make the reading of thy Word not a penance, but a pleasure unto me; teach me, that as amongst many heaps of gold, all being equally pure, that is the best which is the biggest, so I may esteem that chapter in thy Word the best that is the longest.

XXII.

LORD,—I find David making a syllogism, in mood and figure, two propositions he perfected.

18. If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear me : *

19. But verily God hath heard me ; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

Now I expected that David should have concluded thus :

Therefore I regard not wickedness in my heart.

But far otherwise he concludes :

20. Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

Thus David hath deceived, but not wronged me. I looked that he should have clapped the crown on his own, and he puts it on God's head. I will learn this excellent logic ; for I like David's better than Aristotle's syllogisms, that

* Psalm lxvi.

whatsoever the premises be, I make God's glory the conclusion.

XXIII.

LORD,—Wise Agur made it his wish, Give me not poverty, lest I steal, and take the name of my God in vain.* He saith not, Lest I steal, and be caught in the manner, and then be stocked, or whipped, or branded, or forced to fourfold restitution, or put to any other shameful or painful punishment. But he saith, Lest I steal, and take the name of my God in vain: that is, lest professing to serve thee, I confute a good profession with a bad conversation. Thus thy children count sin to be the greatest smart in sin, as being more sensible of the wound they therein give to the glory of God, than of all the stripes that man may lay upon them for punishment.

* Prov. xxx. 9.

XXIV.

LORD,—I read that when my Saviour dispossessed the man's son of a devil, he enjoined the evil spirit to come out of him, and enter no more into him.* But I find that when my Saviour himself was tempted of Satan,† the devil departed from him for a season. Retreating, as it seems, with mind to return. How came it to pass, Lord, that he who expelled him finally out of others, did not propel him so from himself? Sure it does not follow that because he did not, he could not do it. Or that he was less able to help himself, because he was more charitable to relieve others. No; I see my Saviour was pleased to shew himself a God in other men's matters, and but a man in such cases wherein he himself was concerned. Being contented still to be tempted by Satan, that his sufferings for us might cause our conquering through him.

* Mark ix. 25.

† Luke iv. 13.

XXV.

LORD,—Jannes and Jambres,* the apes of Moses and Aaron, imitated them in turning their rods into serpents; only here was the difference: Aaron's rod devoured their rods.† That which was solid and substantial lasted, when that which was slight, and but seeming, vanished away. Thus an active fancy in all outward expressions may imitate a lively faith. For matter of language, there is nothing that grace doth do but wit can act. Only the difference appears in the continuance: wit is but for fits and flashes—grace holds out, and is lasting; and, good Lord, of thy goodness, give it to every one that truly desires it.

* 2 Tim. iii. 8.

† Exod. vii. 12.






Historical Applications.



I.

HE English ambassador some years since prevailed so far with the Turkish emperor, as to persuade him to hear some of our English music, from which (as from other liberal sciences) both he and his nation were naturally averse. But it happened that the musicians were so long in tuning their instruments, that the great Turk, distasting their tediousness, went away in discontent before their music began. I am afraid that the differences and dissensions betwixt Christian churches (being so

long in reconciling their discords) will breed in pagans such a disrelish of our religion, as they will not be invited to attend thereunto.

II.

A SIBYL came to Tarquinius Superbus king of Rome, and offered to sell unto him three tomes of her oracles:* but he, counting the price too high, refused to buy them. Away she went and burnt one tome of them. Returning, she asketh him, whether he would buy the two remaining at the same rate: he refused again, counting her little better than frantic. Thereupon she burns the second tome; and peremptorily asked him, whether he would give the sum demanded for all the three for the one tome remaining; otherwise, she would burn that also, and he would dearly repent it. Tarquin, admiring at her constant resolution, and conceiving some

* M. Varro, Solinus, Plinius, Halicar., &c.

extraordinary worth contained therein, gave her her demand. There are three volumes of man's time; youth, man's estate, and old age; and ministers advise them to redeem this time.* But men conceive the rate they must give to be unreasonable, because it will cost them the renouncing of their carnal delights. Hereupon one third part of their life (youth) is consumed in the fire of wantonness. Again, ministers counsel men to redeem the remaining volumes of their life. They are but derided at for their pains. And man's estate is also cast away in the smoke of vanity. But preachers ought to press peremptorily on old people to redeem, now or never, the last volume of their life. Here is the difference: the sibyl still demanded but the same rate for the remaining book; but aged folk (because of their custom in sinning) will find it harder and dearer to redeem this, the last volume, than if they

* Ephes. v. 16.

had been chapmen for all three at the first.

III.

IN Merionethshire* in Wales there be many mountains whose hanging tops come so close together that shepherds sitting on several mountains may audibly discourse one with another. And yet they must go many miles before their bodies can meet together, by the reason of the vast hollow valleys which are betwixt them. Our sovereign and the members of his Parliament at London seem very near agreed in their general and public professions; both are for the Protestant religion; can they draw nearer? Both are for the privileges of Parliament; can they come closer? Both are for the liberty of the subject; can they meet evener? And yet, alas, there is a great gulf and vast distance betwixt them which

* Giraldus Cambrensis, and Camden in the description of that shire.

our sins have made, and God grant that our sorrow may seasonably make it up again.

IV.

WHEN John king of France had communicated the order of the knighthood of the star to some of his guard, men of mean birth and extraction, the nobility ever after disdained to be admitted into that degree, and so that order in France was extinguished. Seeing that now-a-days drinking, and swearing, and wantonness are grown frequent, even with base beggarly people; it is high time for men of honour, who consult with their credit, to desist from such sins. Not that I would have noblemen invent new vices to be in fashion with themselves alone, but forsake old sins grown common with the meanest of people.

V.

LONG was this land wasted with civil

war, betwixt the two houses of York and Lancaster, till the red rose became white with the blood it had lost, and the white rose red with the blood it had shed. At last they were united in a happy marriage, and their joint titles are twisted together in our gracious Sovereign. Thus there hath been a great difference betwixt learned men wherein the dominion over the creature is founded. Some putting it in nature, others placing it in grace. But the true servants of God have an unquestioned right thereunto: seeing both nature and grace, the first and second Adam, creation and regeneration, are contained in them. Hence their claim is so clear, their title is so true, ignorance cannot doubt it, impudence dare not deny it.

VI.

THE Roman senators conspired against Julius Cæsar to kill him: that very next

morning Artemidorus,* Cæsar's friend, delivered him a paper (desiring him to peruse it) wherein the whole plot was discovered: but Cæsar complimented his life away, being so taken up to return the salutations of such people as met him in the way, that he pocketed the paper, among other petitions, as unconcerned therein; and so, going to the senate-house, was slain. The world, flesh, and devil have a design for the destruction of men; we ministers bring our people a letter, God's Word, wherein all the conspiracy is revealed. But who hath believed our report? Most men are so busy about worldly delights, they are not at leisure to listen to us, or read the letter; but thus, alas, run headlong to their own ruin and destruction.

VII.

It is reported of Philip the Second, king of Spain, that besieging the town of St

* Plutarch, in Julius Cæsar.

Quintin, and being to make a breach, he was forced with his cannon to batter down a small chapel on the wall, dedicated to St Lawrence. In reparation to which saint, he afterwards built and consecrated unto him that famous chapel in the Escorial in Spain—for workmanship, one of the wonders of the world. How many churches and chapels of the God of St Lawrence have been laid waste in England by this woeful war? And, which is more, (and more to be lamented,) how many living temples of the Holy Ghost, Christian people, have therein been causelessly and cruelly destroyed? How shall our nation be ever able to make recompence for it? God of his goodness forgive us that debt which we of ourselves are not able to satisfy.

VIII.

IN the days of King Edward the Sixth,* the Lord Protector marched with a power-

* Sir John Heywood, in the life of Edward the Sixth.

ful army into Scotland, to demand their young queen Mary in marriage to our king, according to their promises. The Scotch refusing to do it, were beaten by the English in Musselburgh fight. One demanding of a Scottish lord, (taken prisoner in the battle,) "Now, sir, how do you like our king's marriage with your queen?" "I always," quoth he, "did like the marriage; but I do not like the wooing, that you should fetch a bride with fire and sword." It is not enough for men to propound pious projects to themselves, if they go about by indirect courses to compass them. God's own work must be done by God's own ways. Otherwise we can take no comfort in obtaining the end, if we cannot justify the means used thereunto.

IX.

A SAGAMORE, or petty king in Virginia, guessing the greatness of other kings by his own, sent a native hither, who under-

stood English; commanding him to score upon a long cane (given him of purpose to be his register) the number of Englishmen, that thereby his master might know the strength of this our nation. Landing at Plymouth, a populous place, (and which he mistook for all England,) he had no leisure to eat, for notching up the men he met. At Exeter the difficulty of his task was increased; coming at last to London (that forest of people) he broke his cane in pieces, perceiving the impossibility of his employment. Some may conceive that they can reckon up the sins they commit in one day. Perchance they may make hard shifts to sum up their notorious ill deeds; more difficult it is to score up their wicked words. But oh, how infinite are their idle thoughts! High time, then, to leave off counting, and cry out with David,* Who can tell how oft he offendeth? Lord, cleanse me from my secret sins.

* Psalm xix. 12.

X.

MARTIN DE GOLIN, master of the Teutonic order,* was taken prisoner by the Prussians, and delivered bound to be beheaded. But he persuaded his executioner (who had him alone) first to take off his costly clothes, which otherwise would be spoiled with the sprinkling of his blood. Now the prisoner, being partly unbound, to be unclothed, and finding his arms somewhat loosened, struck the executioner to the ground, killed him afterwards with his own sword, and so regained both his life and liberty. Christ hath overcome the world,† and delivered it to us to destroy it. But we are all Achans by nature, and the Babylonish garment is a bait for our covetousness: whilst, therefore, we seek to take the plunder of this world's wardrobe, we let go the mastery we had formerly of it. And too often that which Christ's passion made our captive, our folly makes our conqueror.

* Munster's *Cosmography*, book iii., p. 878.

† John xvi. 33.

XI.

I READ how Pope Pius the Fourth* had a great ship, richly laden, landed at Sandwich in Kent, where it suddenly sunk, and so, with the sands, choked up the harbour, that ever since that place hath been deprived of the benefit thereof. I see that happiness doth not always attend the adventures of his holiness. Would he had carried away his ship, and left us our harbour. May his spiritual merchandise never come more into this island, but rather sink in the Tiber than sail thus far, bringing so small good and so great annoyance. Sure he is not so happy in opening the doors of heaven, as he is unhappy to obstruct havens on earth.

XII.

JEFFRY, Archbishop of York, and baseson to King Henry the Second,† used proudly

* Camd. Britan., in Kent.

† Gualterus Mappæus De Nugis Curialium.

to protest by his faith and the royalty of the king his father. To whom one said, "You may sometimes, sir, as well remember what was the honesty of your mother." Good men, when puffed up with pride for their heavenly extraction and paternal descent, how they are God's sons by adoption, may seasonably call to mind the corruption which they carry about them. I have said to the worm, Thou art my mother.* And this consideration will temper their souls with humility.

XIII.

I COULD both sigh and smile at the simplicity of a native American, sent by a Spaniard, his master, with a basket of figs, and a letter, (wherein the figs were mentioned,) to carry them both to one of his master's friends. By the way, this messenger eat up the figs but delivered the letter, whereby his deed was discovered, and he soundly punished. Being sent a

* Job xvii. 14.

second time on the like message, he first took the letter (which he conceived had eyes as well as a tongue) and hid it in the ground, sitting himself on the place where he put it; and then securely fell to feed on his figs, presuming that that paper which saw nothing could tell nothing. Then taking it again out of the ground, he delivered it to his master's friend, whereby his fault was perceived, and he worse beaten than before. Men conceive they can manage their sins with secrecy; but they carry about them a letter, or book rather, written by God's finger, their conscience bearing witness to all their actions.* But sinners being often detected and accused, hereby grow wary at last, and to prevent this speaking paper from telling any tales, do smother, stifle, and suppress it, when they go about the committing of any wickedness. Yet conscience (though buried for a time in silence) hath afterwards a resurrection, and discovers all to

* Rom. ii. 15.

their greater shame and heavier punishment.

XIV.

JOHN COURCY, Earl of Ulster in Ireland, endeavoured fifteen several times to sail over thither, and so often was beaten back again with bad weather. At last he expostulated his case with God in a vision,* complaining of hard measure; that, having built and repaired so many monasteries to God and his saints, he should have so bad success. It was answered him, that this was but his just punishment, because he had formerly put the image of the Trinity † out of the cathedral church of Down, and placed the picture of St Patrick in the room thereof. Surely God will not hold them guiltless who jostle him out of his temple, and give to saints that adoration due alone to his Divine Majesty.

* *Annal. Hibern.*, in anno 1204; and *Camden's Brit.*, p. 797.

† Lawfully, I presume, I apply a popish vision to confute a popish practice.

XV.

THE Libyans kept all women in common. But when a child was born, they used to send it to that man to maintain (as father thereof) whom the infant most resembled in his complexion. Satan and my sinful nature enter common in my soul, in the causing of wicked thoughts. The sons by their faces speak their sires. Proud, wanton, covetous, envious, idle thoughts, I must own to come from myself. God forgive me, it is vain to deny it, those children are so like to their father. But as for some hideous, horrible thoughts, such as I start at the notion of them, being out of the road of my corruption, (and yet which way will not that wander?) so that they smell of hell's brimstone about them: these fall to Satan's lot to father them. The swarthy blackness of their complexion plainly shews who begot them; not being of mine extraction, but his injection.

XVI.

MARCUS MANLIUS deserved exceedingly well of the Roman state, having valiantly defended their capitol. But afterward, falling into disfavour with the people, he was condemned to death. However, the people would not be so unthankful as to suffer him to be executed in any place from whence the capitol might be beheld. For the prospect thereof prompted them with fresh remembrance of his former merits. At last, they found a low place in the Petiline grove, by the river gate, where no pinnacle of the capitol could be perceived, and there he was put to death.* We may admire how men can find in their hearts to sin against God. For we can find no one place in the whole world which is not marked with a signal character of his mercy unto us. It was said properly of the Jews, but is not untrue of all Christians, that they are God's vineyard. And

* Livius, lib. vi., cap. 20.

God fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst thereof; and also digged a winepress therein;* which way can men look, and not have their eyes met with the remembrance of God's favour unto them? Look about the vineyard, it is fenced; look without it, the stones are cast out; look within it, it is planted with the choicest vine; look above it, a tower is built in the midst thereof; look beneath it, a winepress is digged. It is impossible for one to look any way, and to avoid the beholding of God's bounty. Ungrateful man! And as there is no place, so there is no time for us to sin, without being at that instant beholden to him; we owe to him what we are even when we are rebellious against him.

XVII.

A DUEL was to be fought, by consent

* Mark xii. 1.

of both kings,* betwixt an English and a French lord. The aforesaid John Courcy, Earl of Ulster, was chosen champion for the English; a man of great stomach and strength, but lately much weakened by long imprisonment. Wherefore, to prepare himself beforehand, the king allowed him what plenty and variety of meat he was pleased to eat. But the monsieur who was to encounter him hearing what great quantity of victuals Courcy did daily devour, and thence collecting his unusual strength, out of fear, refused to fight with him. If by the standard of their cups, and measure of their drinking, one might truly infer soldiers' strength by rules of proportion, most vast and valiant achievements may justly be expected from some gallants of these times.

XVIII.

I HAVE heard that the brook near Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, into which the

* Annal. Hibern., in anno 1204; and Camden's Brit., p. 797.

ashes of the burnt bones of Wickliffe were cast, never since doth drown the meadow about it. Papists expound this to be, because God was well pleased with the sacrifice of the ashes of such a heretic. Protestants ascribe it rather to proceed from the virtue of the dust of such a reverent martyr. I see it is a case for friend. Such accidents signify nothing in themselves but according to the pleasure of interpreters. Give me such solid reasons, whereon I may rest and rely. Solomon saith, The words of the wise are like nails fastened by the masters of the assembly.* A nail is firm, and will hold driving in, and will hold driven in. Send me such arguments. As for these waxen topical devices, I shall never think worse or better of any religion for their sake.

XIX.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT, † when a child,

* Eccles. x. 11.

† Plutarch, in the life of Alexander the Great.

was checked by his governor Leonidas for being over-profuse in spending perfumes : because on a day, being to sacrifice to the gods, he took both his hands full of frankincense, and cast it into the fire : but afterwards, being a man, he conquered the country of Judæa, (the fountain whence such spices did flow,) and sent Leonidas a present of five hundred talents' weight of frankincense, to shew him how his former prodigality made him thrive the better in success, and to advise him to be no more niggardly in divine service. Thus they that sow plentifully shall reap plentifully. I see there is no such way to have a large heart as to have a large heart. The free giving of the branches of our present estate to God, is the readiest means to have the root increased for the future.

XX.

THE poets fable that this was one of the labours imposed on Hercules, to make clean the Augean stable, or stall rather.

For therein, they said, were kept three thousand kine, and it had not been cleansed for thirty years together. But Hercules, by letting the river Alpheus into it, did that with ease which before was conceived impossible. This stall is the pure emblem of my impure soul, which hath been defiled with millions of sins, for more than thirty years together. Oh that I might by a lively faith, and unfeigned repentance, let the stream of that fountain into my soul, which is opened for Judah and Jerusalem. It is impossible by all my pains to purge out my uncleanness; which is quickly done by the rivulet of the blood of my Saviour.

XXI.

THE Venetians shewed the treasure of their state, being in many great coffers full of gold and silver, to the Spanish ambassador. But the ambassador, peeping under the bottom of those coffers, demanded, whether that their treasure did daily grow,

and had a root; for such, saith he, my master's treasure hath; meaning both his Indies. Many men have attained to a great height of piety, to be very abundant and rich therein. But all theirs is but a cistern, not fountain grace; only God's goodness hath a spring of itself in itself.

XXII.

THE Sidonian servants agreed amongst themselves* to choose him to be their king who that morning should first see the sun. Whilst all others were gazing on the east, one alone looked on the west. Some admired, more mocked him, as if he looked on the feet, there to find the eye of the face. But he first of all discovered the light of the sun shining on the tops of houses. God is seen sooner, easier, clearer in his operations than in his essence. Best beheld by reflection in his creatures. For the invisible things of him, from the

* Justin, lib. xviii., p. 166.

creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.*

XXIII.

AN Italian prince, as much delighted with the person as grieved with the prodigality of his eldest son, commanded his steward to deliver him no more money but what the young prince should tell his own self. The young gallant fretted at his heart, that he must buy money at so dear a rate, as to have it for telling it, but (because there was no remedy) he set himself to task, and being greatly tired with telling a small sum, he broke off on this consideration. Money may speedily be spent, but how tedious and troublesome is it to tell it! And by consequence how much more difficult to get it! Men may commit sin presently, pleasantly, with much mirth, in a moment. But oh, that they would but seriously consider with

* Rom. i. 20.

themselves how many their offences are, and sadly fall accounting them! And if so hard truly to sum their sins, sure harder sincerely to sorrow for them. If to get their number be so difficult, what is it to get their pardon?

XXIV.

I KNOW the village in Cambridgeshire* where there was a cross full of imagery. Some of the images were such, as that people, not foolishly factious, but judiciously conscientious, took just exception at them: hard by, the youths of the town erected a Maypole, and to make it of proof against any that should endeavour to cut it down, they armed it with iron as high as any could reach. A violent wind happened to blow it down, which, falling on the cross, dashed it to pieces. It is possible, what is counted profaneness may accidentally correct superstition. But I

* Cottenham.

could heartily wish that all pretenders to reformation would first labour to be good themselves before they go about the amending of others.

XXV.

I READ that Ægæus, the father of Theseus,* hid a sword and a pair of shoes under a great stone; and left word with his wife, (whom he left with child,) that when the son she should bear was able to take up that stone, wield that sword, and wear those shoes, then she should send him to him: for by these signs he would own him for his own son. Christ hath left in the custody of the Church our mother the sword of the Spirit, and the shoes of a Christian conversation, the same which he once wore himself, and they must fit our feet, yea, and we must take up the weight of many heavy crosses, before we can come at them; but when we shall appear before

* Plutarch, in Theseus.

our heavenly Father, bringing these tokens with us, then, and not before, he will acknowledge us to be no bastards, but his true-born children.





Six Contemplations.



I.

WHEN I look on a leaden bullet, therein I can read both God's mercy and man's malice. God's mercy, whose providence foreseeing, that men of lead would make instruments of cruelty, did give that metal a medicinal virtue; as it hurts, so it also heals; and a bullet sent in by man's hatred into a fleshy and no vital part, will, (with ordinary care and curing,) out of a natural charity, work its own way out. But oh! how devilish were those men, who, to frustrate and defeat his goodness, and

to countermand the healing power of lead, first found the champing and empoisoning of bullets! Fools, who account themselves honoured with the shameful title of being the inventors of evil things,* endeavouring to out-infinite God's kindness with their cruelty.

II.

I HAVE heard some men, rather causelessly captious than judicially critical, cavil at grammarians for calling some conjunctions disjunctive, as if this were a flat contradiction. Whereas, indeed, the same particle may conjoin words, and yet disjoin the sense. But, alas! how sad is the present condition of Christians, who have a communion disuniting. The Lord's Supper, ordained by our Saviour to conjoin our affections, hath disjoined our judgments. Yea, it is to be feared, lest our long quarrels about the manner of his presence,

* Rom. i. 30.

cause the matter of his absence, for our want of charity to receive him.

III.

I HAVE observed that children when they first put on new shoes, are very curious to keep them clean. Scarce will they set their feet on the ground for fear to dirt the soles of their shoes. Yea, rather they will wipe the leather clean with their coats; and yet, perchance, the next day they will trample with the same shoes in the mire up to the ankles. Alas, children's play is our earnest! On that day wherein we receive the sacrament, we are often over-precise, scrupling to say or do those things which lawfully we may. But we, who are more than curious that day, are not so much as careful the next; and too often (what shall I say?) go on in sin up to the ankles: yea, our sins go over our heads.*

* Psalm xxxviii. 4.

IV.

I KNOW some men very desirous to see the devil, because they conceive such an apparition would be a confirmation of their faith. For then, by the logic of opposites, they will conclude there is a God because there is a devil. Thus they will not believe there is heaven, except hell itself will be deposed for a witness thereof. Surely such men's wishes are vain, and hearts are wicked; for if they will not believe, having Moses and the prophets, and the apostles, they will not believe, no, if the devil from hell appears unto them. Such apparitions were never ordained by God as the means of faith. Besides, Satan will never shew himself but to his own advantage. If as a devil, to fright them, if as an angel of light, to flatter them, however, to hurt them. For my part I never desire to see him. And oh! (if it were possible) that I might never feel him in his motions and temptations!

I say, let me never see him till the day of judgment, where he shall stand arraigned at the bar, and God's majesty sit judge on the bench ready to condemn him.

V.

I OBSERVE that antiquaries, such as prize skill above profit, (as being rather curious than covetous,) do prefer the brass coins of the Roman emperors before those in gold and silver. Because there is much falseness and forgery daily detected, and more suspected, in gold and silver medals, as being commonly cast and counterfeited, whereas brass coins are presumed upon as true and ancient, because it will not quit cost for any to counterfeit them. Plain dealing, Lord, what I want in wealth may I have in sincerity. I care not how mean metal my estate be of, if my soul have the true stamp, really impressed with the unfeigned image of the King of heaven.

VI.

LOOKING on the chapel of king Henry the Seventh, in Westminster, (God grant I may once again see it, with the saint who belongs to it, our sovereign, there in a well-conditioned peace!) I say, looking on the outside of the chapel, I have much admired the curious workmanship thereof. It added to the wonder, that it is so shadowed with mean houses, well-nigh on all sides, that one may almost touch it as soon as see it. Such a structure needed no base buildings about it, as foils to set it off. Rather this chapel may pass for the emblem of a great worth living in a private way. How is he pleased with his own obscurity, whilst others of less desert make greater show: and whilst proud people stretch out their plumes in ostentation, he useth their vanity for his shelter; more pleased to have worth than to have others take notice of it.

VII.

THE mariners at sea count it the sweetest perfume when the water in the keel of their ship doth stink. For hence they conclude that it is but little, and long since leaked in; but it is woeful with them when the water is felt before it is smelt, as fresh flowing in upon them in abundance. It is the best savour in a Christian soul when his sins are loathsome and offensive unto him. A happy token that there hath not been of late in him any insensible supply of heinous offences, because his stale sins are still his new and daily sorrow.

VIII.

I HAVE sometimes considered in what troublesome case is that chamberlain in an inn, who, being but one, is to give attendance to many guests. For suppose them all in one chamber, yet if one shall command him to come to the window, and the other to the table, and another to the

bed, and another to the chimney, and another to come up stairs, and another to go down stairs, and all in the same instant, how would he be distracted to please them all. And yet such is the sad condition of my soul by nature, not only a servant, but a slave unto sin. Pride calls me to the window, gluttony to the table, wantonness to the bed, laziness to the chimney, ambition commands me to go up stairs, and covetousness to come down. Vices, I see, are as well contrary to themselves as to virtue. Free me, Lord, from this distracted case; fetch me from being sin's servant to be thine, whose service is perfect freedom; for thou art but one, and ever the same, and always enjoimest commands agreeable to themselves, thy glory, and my good.

IX.

I HAVE observed that towns which have been casually burnt, have been built again more beautiful than before; mud

walls, afterwards made of stone; and roofs, formerly but thatched, after advanced to be tiled. The apostle tells me that I must not think strange concerning the fiery trial which is to happen unto me.* May I likewise prove improved by it. Let my renewed soul, which grows out of the ashes of the old man, be a more firm fabric, and stronger structure: so shall affliction be my advantage.

X,

OUR Saviour saith, When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.† Yet one may generally observe that almshouses are commonly built by highway sides, the ready road to ostentation. However, far be it from me to make bad comments on their bounty: I rather interpret it, that they place those houses so publicly, thereby not to gain applause, but imitation. Yea, let those who will plant pious works, have the liberty to

* 1 Peter iv. 12.

† Matt. vi. 3.

choose their own ground. Especially in this age, wherein we are likely, neither in byways nor highways, to have any works of mercy, till the whole kingdom be speedily turned into one great hospital, and God's charity only able to relieve us.

XI.

How wrangling and litigious were we in the time of peace! How many actions were created of nothing! Suits we had commenced about a mouthful of grass, or a handful of hay. Now he who formerly would sue his neighbour for *pedibus ambulando*, can behold his whole field lying waste and must be content. We see our goods taken from us and dare say nothing, not so much as seeking any legal redress, because certain not to find it. May we be restored in due time to our former properties, but not to our former peevishness. And when law shall be again awaked, (or rather revived,) let us express our thanks to God for so great a gift, by using it not

wantonly (as formerly, in vexing our neighbours about trifles) but soberly, to right ourselves in matters of moment.

XII.

ALMOST twenty years since, I heard a profane jest, and still remember it. How many pious passages of far later date have I forgotten! It seems my soul is like a filthy pond, wherein fish die soon, and frogs live long. Lord, raze this profane jest out of my memory. Leave not a letter thereof behind, lest my corruption (an apt scholar) guess it out again; and be pleased to write some pious meditation in the place thereof. And grant, Lord, for the time to come (because such bad guests are easier kept out) that I may be careful not to admit what I find so difficult to expel.

XIII.

I PERCEIVE there is in the world a good nature, falsely so called, as being nothing else but a facile and flexible disposition,

wax for every impression. What others are so bold to beg, they are so bashful as not to deny. Such osiers can never make beams to bear stress in church and state. If this be good-nature, let me always be a clown; if this be good fellowship, let me always be a churl. Give me to set a sturdy porter before my soul, who may not equally open to every comer. I cannot conceive how he can be a friend to any, who is a friend to all, and the worst foe to himself.

XIV.

HA is the interjection of laughter; ah is an interjection of sorrow. The difference betwixt them very small, as consisting only in the transposition of what is no substantial letter, but a bare aspiration. How quickly, in the age of a minute, in the very turning of a breath, is our mirth changed into mourning!

XV.

I HAVE a great friend whom I endeavour

and desire to please, but hitherto all in vain : the more I seek, the farther off I am from finding his favour. Whence comes this miscarriage? Are not my applications to man more frequent than my addresses to my Maker? Do I not love his smiles more than I fear Heaven's frowns? I confess, to my shame, that sometimes his anger hath grieved me more than my sins. Hereafter, by thy assistance, I will labour to approve my ways in God's presence; so shall I either have, or not need his friendship, and either please him with more ease, or displease him with less danger.

XVI.

THIS nation is scourged with a wasting war. Our sins were ripe; God could no longer be just if we were prosperous. Blessed be his name that I had suffered my share in the calamities of my country. Had I poised myself so politicly betwixt both parties, that I had suffered from neither, yet could I have taken no content-

ment in my safe escaping. For why should I, equally engaged with others in sinning, be exempted above them from the punishment? And seeing the bitter cup, which my brethren have pledged, to pass by me, I should fear it would be filled again, and returned double, for me to drink it. Yea, I should suspect that I were reserved alone for a greater shame and sorrow. It is therefore some comfort that I draw in the same yoke with my neighbours, and with them jointly bear the burden which our sins jointly brought upon us.

XVII.

WHEN, in my private prayers, I have been to confess my bosom sins unto God, I have been loth to speak them aloud; fearing (though no man could, yet) that the devil would overhear me, and make use of my words against me. It being probable, that when I have discovered the weakest part of my soul, he would assault me there. Yet since, I have considered that therein

I shall tell Satan no news, which he knew not before. Surely I have not managed my secret sins with such privacy, but that he, from some circumstances, collected what they were. Though the fire was within, he saw some smoke without. Wherefore, for the future, I am resolved to acknowledge my darling faults, though alone, yet aloud; that the devil, who rejoiced in partly knowing of my sins, may be grieved more by hearing the expression of my sorrow. As for any advantage he may make from my confession, this comforts me: God's goodness in assisting me will be above Satan's malice in assaulting me.

XVIII.

IN the midst of my morning prayers I had a good meditation, which since I have forgotten. Thus much I remember of it, that it was pious in itself, but not proper for that time. For it took much from my devotion, and added nothing to my instruc-

tion; and my soul, not able to intend two things at once, abated of its fervency in praying. Thus snatching at two employments, I held neither well. Sure this meditation came not from him who is the God of order; he useth to fasten all his nails, and not to drive out one with another. If the same meditation return again, when I have leisure, and room to receive it, I will say it is of his sending, who so mustereth and marshalleth all good actions, that like the soldiers in his army, mentioned in the prophet, they shall not thrust one another, they shall walk every one in his own path.*

XIX.

WHEN I go speedily in any action, Lord give me to call my soul to an account. It is a shrewd suspicion that my bowl runs downhill, because it runs so fast. And, Lord, when I go in an unlawful way, start some rubs to stop me, let my foot slip or

* Joel ii. 8.

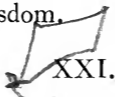
stumble. And give me the grace to understand the language of the lets thou throwest in my way. Thou hast promised, I will hedge up thy way.* Lord, be pleased to make the hedge high enough and thick enough, that if I be so mad as to adventure to climb over it, I may not only soundly rake my clothes, but rend my flesh: yea, let me rather be caught, and stick in the hedge, than breaking in through it, fall on the other side into the deep ditch of eternal damnation.

XX.

COMING hastily into a chamber, I had almost thrown down a crystal hour-glass. Fear, lest I had, made me grieve as if I had broken it. But alas, how much precious time have I cast away without any regret! The hour-glass was but crystal, each hour a pearl; that but like to be broken, this lost outright; that but casually, this done wilfully. A better hour-

* Hosea ii. 6.

glass might be bought; but time lost once, lost ever. Thus we grieve more for toys than for treasure. Lord, give me an hour-glass, not to be by me, but to be in me. Teach me to number my days.* An hour-glass to turn me, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.



XXI.

WHEN a child, I loved to look on the pictures in the Book of Martyrs. I thought that there the martyrs at the stake seemed like the three children in the fiery furnace, † ever since I had known them there, not one hair more of their head was burnt, nor any smell of the fire singeing of their clothes. This made me think martyrdom was nothing. But oh, though the lion be painted fiercer than he is, the fire is far fiercer than it is painted. Thus it is easy for one to endure an affliction, as he limns it out in his own fancy, and represents it to himself but in a bare

* Psalm xc. 12.

† Dan. iii. 27.

speculation. But when it is brought indeed, and laid home to us, there must be the man, yea, there must be God to assist the man to undergo it.

XXII.

TRAVELLING on the plain, (which notwithstanding hath its risings and fallings,) I discovered Salisbury steeple many miles off; coming to a declivity, I lost the sight thereof; but climbing up the next hill, the steeple grew out of the ground again. Yea, I often found it and lost it, till at last I came safely to it, and took my lodging near it. It fareth thus with us, whilst we are wayfaring to heaven, mounted on the Pisgah top of some good meditation, we get a glimpse of our celestial Canaan.* But when, either on the flat of an ordinary temper, or in the fall of an extraordinary temptation, we lose the view thereof. Thus, in the sight of our soul, heaven is discovered, covered, and recovered; till,

* Deut. xxxiv. 1.

though late, at last, though slowly, surely, we arrive at the haven of our happiness.

XXIII.

LORD,—I find myself in the latitude of a fever. I am neither well nor ill; not so well that I have any mind to be merry with my friends, nor so ill that my friends have any cause to condole with me. I am a probationer in point of my health. As I shall behave myself, so I may be either expelled out of it, or admitted into it. Lord, let my distemper stop here, and go no farther. Shoot not thy murdering pieces against that clay castle, which surrendereth itself at thy first summons. O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength. I beg not to be forgiven, but to be forborne my debt to nature. And I only crave time for a while, till I am better fitted and furnished to pay it.

XXIV.

IT seemed strange to me when I was told

that aqua-vitæ, which restores life to others, should itself be made of the droppings of dead beer; and that strong waters should be extracted out of the dregs (almost) of small beer. Surely many other excellent ingredients must concur, and much art must be used in the distillation. Despair not then, O my soul. No extraction is impossible, where the chemist is infinite. He that is all in all can produce anything out of anything; and he can make my soul, which by nature is settled on her lees,* and dead in sin, to be quickened by the infusion of his grace, and purified into a pious disposition.

XXV.

LORD,—How easy is pen-and-paper piety for one to write religiously! I will not say it costeth nothing, but it is far cheaper to work one's head than one's heart to goodness. Some, perchance, may guess me to be good by my writings, and

* Zeph. i. 12.

so I shall deceive my reader. But if I do not desire to be good, I most of all deceive myself. I can make a hundred meditations sooner than subdue the least sin in my soul. Yea, I was once in the mind never to write more; for fear lest my writings at the last day prove records against me. ✓ And yet why should I not write? that by reading my own book, the disproportion betwixt my lines and my life may make me blush myself (if not into goodness) into less badness than I would do otherwise. That so my writings may condemn me, and make me to condemn myself, that so God may be moved to acquit me.



GOOD THOUGHTS

IN

WORSE TIMES.






TO

THE CHRISTIAN READER.



HEN I read the description of the tumult in Ephesus, Acts ix. 32, (wherein they would have their Diana to be *jure divino*, that it fell down from Jupiter,) it appears to me the too methodical character of our present confusions. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another, for the assembly was confused, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. O the distractions of our age! And how

✓ many thousands know as little why the sword was drawn, as when it will be sheathed. Indeed (thanks be to God) we have no more house-burnings but many heart-burnings, and though outward bleeding be stanch'd, it is to be feared that the broken vein bleeds inwards, which is more dangerous.

This being our sad condition, I perceived controversial writings (sounding somewhat of drums and trumpets) do ~~but~~ make the wound the wider. Meditations are like the minstrel the prophet called for,* to pacify his mind discomposed with passion, which moved me to adventure on this treatise, as the most innocent and inoffensive manner of writing.

I confess a volume of another subject, and larger size, is expected from me. But in London I have learnt the difference betwixt downright breaking, and craving

* 2 Kings iii. 15.

time of their creditors. Many sufficient merchants, though not solvable from the present, make use of the latter, whose example I follow. And though I cannot pay the principal, yet I desire such small treatises may be accepted from me, as interest or consideration-money, until I shall, God willing, be enabled to discharge the whole debt.

If any wonder that this treatise comes patronless into the world, let such know, that dedications begin now-a-days to grow out of fashion. His policy was commended by many, (and proved profitable unto himself,) who, instead of select godfathers, made all the congregation witnesses to his child, as I invite the world to this my book, requesting each one would patronise therein such parts and passages thereof as please them, so hoping that by several persons the whole will be protected.

I have, Christian reader (so far I dare

go, not inquiring into the surname of thy side or sect,) nothing more to burden thy patience with. Only I will add, that I find our Saviour, in Tertullian and ancient Latin Fathers, constantly styled a sequester* in the proper notion of the word. For God and man being at odds, the difference was sequestered or referred into Christ his hand to end and umpire it. How it fareth with thy estate on earth I know not; but I earnestly desire, that in heaven both thou and I may ever be under sequestration in that mediator for God's glory and our good, to whose protection thou art committed by

thy brother in all

Christian offices,

THOMAS FULLER.

* Sequester.




Personal Meditations.



I.

CURIOSITY CURBED.

FTEN have I thought with myself, what disease I would be best contented to die of. None please me. The stone, the colic, terrible as expected, intolerable when felt. The palsy is death before death. The consumption a flattering disease, cozening men into hope of long life at the last gasp. Some sicknesses besot, others enrage men, some are too swift, and others too slow.

If I could as easily decline diseases as I

could dislike them, I should be immortal. But away with these thoughts. The mark must not choose what arrow shall be shot against it. What God sends I must receive. May I not be so curious to know what weapon shall wound me, as careful to provide the plaster of patience against it. Only thus much in general: commonly that sickness seizeth on men which they least suspect. He that expects to be drowned with a dropsy may be burnt with a fever; and she that fears to be swollen with a tympany may be shrivelled with a consumption.

II.

DECEIVED, NOT HURT.

Hearing a passing bell, I prayed that the sick man might have, through Christ, a safe voyage to his long home. Afterwards I understood that the party was dead some hours before; and it seems in some places of London the tolling of the

bell is but a preface of course to the ringing it out.

Bells better silent than thus telling lies. What is this but giving a false alarm to men's devotions, to make them to be ready armed with their prayers for the assistance of such who have already fought the good fight, yea, and gotten the conquest? Not to say that men's charity herein may be suspected of superstition in praying for the dead.

However, my heart thus poured out was not spilt on the ground. My prayers, too late to do him good, came soon enough to speak my good will. What I freely tendered, God fairly took, according to the integrity of my intention. The party I hope is in Abraham's, and my prayers I am sure are returned into my own bosom.

III.

NOR FULL, NOR FASTING.

Living in a country village where a

burial was a rarity, I never thought of death, it was so seldom presented unto me. Coming to London, where there is plenty of funerals, (so that coffins crowd one another, and corpses in the grave jostle for elbow-room,) I slight and neglect death because grown an object so constant and common.

How foul is my stomach to turn all food into bad humours? Funerals neither few nor frequent, work effectually upon me. London is a library of mortality. Volumes of all sorts and sizes, rich, poor, infants, children, youth, men, old men, daily die; I see there is more required to make a good scholar than only the having of many books: Lord, be thou my school-master, and teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.

IV.

STRANGE AND TRUE.

I read, in the Revelation,* of a beast,

* Rev. xiii. 3.

one of whose heads was, as it were, wounded to death. I expected in the next verse that the beast should die, as the most probable consequence, considering :

1. It was not a scratch, but a wound.
2. Not a wound in a fleshy part, or outlimbs of the body, but in the very head, the throne of reason.
3. No light wound, but in outward apparition (having no other probe but St John's eyes to search it) it seemed deadly.

But mark what immediately follows : and his deadly wound was healed. Who would have suspected this inference from these premises. But is not this the lively emblem of my natural corruption ? Sometimes I conceive that, by God's grace, I have conquered and killed, subdued and slain, maimed and mortified, the deeds of the flesh : never more shall I be molested or buffeted with such a bosom sin : when, alas ! by the next return, the news is, it is revived and recovered. Thus tenches,

though grievously gashed, presently plaster themselves whole by that slimy and unctuous humour they have in them; and thus the inherent balsam of badness quickly cures my corruption, not a scar to be seen. I perceive I shall never finally kill it, till first I be dead myself.

V.

BLUSHING TO BE BLUSHED FOR.

A person of great quality was pleased to lodge a night in my house. I durst not invite him to my family prayer; and therefore for that time omitted it: thereby making a breach in a good custom, and giving Satan advantage to assault it. Yea, the loosening of such a link might have endangered the scattering of the chain.

Bold bashfulness, which durst offend God, whilst it did fear man. Especially considering, that though my guest was never so high, yet by the laws of hospitality I was above him whilst he was

under my roof. Hereafter whosoever cometh within the doors, shall be requested to come within the discipline of my house; if accepting my homely diet, he will not refuse my home devotion; and sitting at my table, will be entreated to kneel down by it.

VI.

A LASH FOR LAZINESS.

Shameful my sloth, that have deferred my night prayer till I am in bed. This lying along is an improper posture for piety. Indeed there is no contrivance of our body, but some good man in Scripture hath handseled it with prayer. The publican standing, Job sitting,* Hezekiah lying on his bed, Elijah with his face between his legs.† But of all gestures give me St Paul's:‡ for this cause I bow my knees to the father of my Lord Jesus Christ.

* Job ii. 8.

† 1 Kings xviii. 42.

‡ Ephes. iii. 12.

Knees when they may, then they must be bended.

I have read a copy of a grant of liberty from queen Mary to Henry Ratcliffe Earl of Sussex, giving him leave to wear a night-cap or coif in her majesty's presence,* counted a great favour because of his infirmity. I know, in case of necessity, God would graciously accept my devotion, bound down in a sick dressing; but now whilst I am in perfect health it is inexcusable. Christ commanded some to take up their bed, in token of their full recovery; my laziness may suspect, lest thus my bed taking me up prove a presage of my ensuing sickness. But may God pardon my idleness this once, I will not again offend in the same kind, by his grace hereafter.

VII.

ROOT, BRANCH, AND FRUIT.

A poor man of Seville in Spain, having

* Weever's Fun. Mon., p. 635.

a fair and fruitful pear tree, one of the fathers of the inquisition desired (such tyrants' requests are commands) some of the fruit thereof. The poor man, not out of gladness to gratify, but fear to offend, as if it were a sin for him to have better fruit than his betters, (suspecting on his denial the tree might be made his own rod, if not his gallows,) plucked up tree, roots and all, and gave it unto him.

Allured with love to God, and advised by my own advantage, what he was frightened to do, I will freely perform. God calleth on me to present him with fruits meet for repentance.* Yea, let him take all, soul and body, powers and parts, faculties and members of both, I offer a sacrifice unto himself. Good reason; for indeed the tree was his before it was mine, and I give him of his own.

Besides, it was doubtful whether the poor man's material tree, being removed, would grow again. Some plants trans-

* Matt. iii. 8.

planted (especially when old) become sullen, and do not enjoy themselves in a soil wherewith they were unacquainted. But sure I am when I have given myself to God, the moving of my soul shall be the mending of it, he will dress so *ἀρῆν* and *καθαίρειν*,* so prune and purge me, that I shall bring forth most fruit in my age.

VIII.

GOD SPEED THE PLOUGH.

I saw in seedtime a husbandman at plough, in a very rainy day; asking him the reason why he would not rather leave off than labour in such foul weather, his answer was returned me in their country rhyme :

Sow beans in the mud,
And they 'll come up like a wood.

This could not but mind me of David's expression, they that sow in tears shall

* John xv. 2.

reap in joy.* He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

These last five years have been a wet and woful seedtime to me, and many of my afflicted brethren. Little hope have we, as yet, to come again to our own homes, and, in a literal sense, now to bring our sheaves, which we see others daily carry away on their shoulders. But if we shall not share in the former or latter harvest here on earth, the third and last in heaven we hope undoubtedly to receive.

IX.

CRAS, CRAS.

Great was the abundance and boldness of the frogs in Egypt, which went up and came into their bedchambers, and beds, and kneading-troughs, and very ovens.† Strange that those fen-dwellers should

* Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6.

† Exod. viii. 3.

approach the fiery region; but stranger that Pharaoh should be so backward to have them removed, and being demanded of Moses when he would have them sent away, answered, to-morrow.* He could be content with their company one night, at bed and at board, loth, belike, to acknowledge either God's justice in sending, or power in remanding them, but still hoping that they casually came, and might casually depart.

Leave I any longer to wonder at Pharaoh, and even admire at myself; what are my sins but so many toads, spitting of venom and spawning of poison; croaking in my judgment, creeping into my will, and crawling into my affections. This I see, and suffer, and say with Pharaoh, to-morrow, to-morrow I will amend. Thus, as the Hebrew tongue hath no proper present tense, but two future tenses, so all the performances of my reformation are only in promises for the time to come. Grant,

* Exod. viii. 10.

Lord, I may seasonably drown this Pharaoh-like procrastination in the sea of repentance, lest it drown me in the pit of perdition.

X.

GREEN WHEN GRAY.

In September I saw a tree bearing roses, whilst others of the same kind, round about it, were barren; demanding the cause of the gardener, why that tree was an exception from the rule of the rest, this reason was rendered: because that alone being clipped close in May, was then hindered to spring and sprout, and therefore took this advantage by itself, to bud in autumn.

Lord, if I were curbed and snipped in my younger years by fear of my parents, from those vicious excrescences to which that age was subject, give me to have a godly jealousy over my heart, suspecting an autumn-spring, lest corrupt nature

(which, without thy restraining grace, will have a vent,) break forth in my reduced years into youthful vanities.

XI.

MISERERE.

There goes a tradition of Ovid, that famous poet, (receiving some countenance from his own confession,*) that when his father was about to beat him for following the pleasant but profitless study of poetry, he, under correction, promised his father never to make a verse, and made a verse in his very promise. Probably the same in sense, but certainly more elegant for composure, than this verse which common credulity hath taken up :

Parce precor, genitor, posthac non versificabo.

Father on me pity take,
Verses I no more will make.

When I so solemnly promise my heavenly Father to sin no more, I sin in my

* De Tristibus, lib. ii. eleg. 10.

very promise ; my weak prayers made to procure my pardon, increase my guiltiness. Oh, the dulness and deadness of my heart therein ! I say my prayers as the Jews eat the Passover,* in haste. And whereas in bodily actions motion is the cause of heat ; clean contrary, the more speed I make in my prayers the colder I am in my devotion.

XII.

MONARCHY AND MERCY.

In reading the Roman (whilst under consuls) and Belgic history of the United Provinces, I remember not any capital offender, being condemned, ever forgiven, but always after sentence follows execution. It seems that the very constitution of a multitude is not so inclinable to save as to destroy. Such rulers in aristocracies or popular states cannot so properly be called gods, because, though having the

* Exod. xii. 11.

great attributes of a deity, power and justice, they want (or will not use) the most godly property of God's clemency, to forgive.

May I die in that government under which I was born, where a monarch doth command. Kings, where they see cause, have graciously granted pardons to men appointed to death; herein the lively image of God, to whom belong mercies and forgiveness.* And although I will endeavour so to behave myself as not to need my sovereign's favour in this kind, yet, because none can warrant his innocency in all things, it is comfortable living in such a commonwealth, where pardons heretofore on occasion have been, and hereafter may be, procured.

XIII.

WHAT HELPS NOT HURT.

A vain thought arose in my heart, in-

* Dan. ix. 9.

stantly my corruption retains itself to be the advocate for it, pleading that the worst that could be said against it was this, that it was a vain thought.

And is not this the best that can be said for it? Remember, O my soul, the fig-tree was charged not with bearing noxious, but no fruit.* Yea, the barren fig-tree bare the fruit of annoyance, cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? Vain thoughts do this ill in my heart, that they do no good.

Besides, the fig-tree pestered but one part of the garden, good grapes might grow at the same time in other places of the vineyard. But seeing my soul is so intent on its object that it cannot attend two things at once, one tree for the time being is all my vineyard. A vain thought engrosseth all the ground of my heart; till that be rooted out no good meditation can grow with it or by it.

* Luke xiii. 7.

XIV.

ALWAYS SEEN, NEVER MINDED.

In the most healthful times, two hundred and upwards was the constant weekly tribute paid to mortality in London. A large bill, but it must be discharged. Can one city spend according to this weekly rate and not be bankrupt of people? At leastwise, must not my shot be called for to make up the reckoning?

When only seven young men, and those chosen by lot, were but yearly taken out of Athens to be devoured by the monster Minotaur,* the whole city was in a constant fright, children for themselves, and parents for their children. Yea, their escaping of the first was but an introduction to the next year's lottery.

Were the dwellers and lodgers in London weekly to cast lots who should make up this two hundred, how would every one

* Plutarch's Lives, in Theseo.

be affrighted! Now none regard it. My security concludes the aforesaid number will amount of infants and old folk. Few men of middle age, and amongst them surely not myself. But oh! is not this putting the evil day far from me the ready way to bring it the nearest to me? The lot is weekly drawn (though not by me) for me, I am therefore concerned seriously to provide, lest that death's prize prove my blank.

XV.

NOT WHENCE, BUT WHITHER.

Finding a bad thought in my heart, I disputed in myself the cause thereof, whether it proceeded from the devil, or my own corruption, examining it by those signs divines in this case recommended.

1. Whether it came in incoherently, or by dependence on some object presented to my senses.

2. Whether the thought was at full age

at the first instant, or, infant-like, grew greater by degrees.

3. Whether out or in the road of my natural inclination.

But hath not this inquiry more of curiosity than religion? Hereafter derive not the pedigree, but make the mittimus of such malefactors. Suppose a confederacy betwixt thieves without and false servants within, to assault and wound the master of a family : thus wounded, would he discuss from which of them his hurts proceeded? No, surely ; but speedily send for a surgeon before he bleed to death. I will no more put it to the question, whence my bad thoughts come, but whither I shall send them, lest this curious controversy insensibly betray me into a consent unto them.

XVI.

STORM, STEER ON.

The mariners sailing with St Paul, bare

up bravely against the tempest whilst either art or industry could befriend them. Finding both to fail, and that they could not any longer bear up into the wind, they even let their ship drive.* I have endeavoured in these distemperate times to hold up my spirits, and to steer them steadily. A happy peace here was the port whereat I desired to arrive. Now, alas! the storm grows too sturdy for the pilot. Hereafter all the skill I will use, is no skill at all, but even let my ship sail whither the winds send it.

Noah's ark was bound for no other port, but preservation for the present, (that ship being all the harbour,) not intending to find land, but to float on water. May my soul (though not sailing to the desired haven) only be kept from sinking in sorrow!

This comforts me, that the most weather-beaten vessel cannot properly be seized on for a wreck which hath any quick cattle

* Acts xxvii. 15.

remaining therein. My spirits are not as yet forfeited to despair, having one lively spark of hope in my heart, because God is even where he was before.

XVII.

WIT OUTWITTED.

Joab chid the man (unknown in Scripture by his name, well-known for his wisdom) for not killing Absalom when he saw him hanged in the tree, promising him for his pains ten shekels and a girdle.

But the man, having the king's command to the contrary, refused his proffer. Well he knew that politic statesman would have dangerous designs fetched out of the fire, but with other men's fingers. His girdle promised might in payment prove a halter. Yea, he added, moreover, that had he killed Absalom, Joab himself would have set himself against him.*

Satan daily solicits me to sin (point

* 2 Sam. xviii. 13.

blank against God's Word,) baiting me with proffers best pleasing my corruption. If I consent, he who last tempted first accuseth me.* The fawning spaniel turns a fierce lion, and roareth out my faults in the ears of Heaven. Grant, Lord, when Satan shall next serve me, as Joab did this nameless Israelite, I may serve him as the nameless Israelite did Joab, flatly refusing his deceitful tenders.

XVIII.

HEREAFTER.

David fasted and prayed for his sick son, that his life might be prolonged. But when he was dead this consideration comforted him: I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.†

Peace did long lie languishing in this land. No small contentment that to my poor power I have prayed and preached for the preservation thereof. Seeing since

* Rev. xii. 10.

† 2 Sam. xii. 23.

it is departed this supports my soul, having little hope that peace here should return to me, I have some assurance that I shall go to peace hereafter.

XIX.

BAD AT BEST.

Lord, how come wicked thoughts to perplex me in my prayers, when I desire and endeavour only to attend thy service? Now I perceive the cause thereof; at other times I have willingly entertained them, and now they entertain themselves against my will. I acknowledge thy justice, that what formerly I have invited, now I cannot expel. Give me hereafter always to bolt out such ill guests. The best way to be rid of such bad thoughts in my prayers is not to receive them out of my prayers.

XX.

COMPENDIUM DISPENDIUM.

Pope Boniface the Ninth, at the end of each hundred years, appointed a jubilee at Rome, wherein people, bringing themselves and money thither, had pardon for their sins.

But centenary years returned but seldom, popes were old before, and covetous when they came to their place. Few had the happiness to fill their coffers with jubilee-coin. Hereupon, Clement the Sixth reduced it to every three-and-thirtieth, Paul the Second and Sixtus the Fourth to every twenty-fifth year.*

Yea, an agitation is reported in the conclave to bring down jubilees to fifteen, twelve, or ten years, had not some cardinals (whose policy was above their covetousness) opposed it.

I serve my prayers as they their jubilees.

* Examen con. Trident., p. 736, col. 2.

✓ Perchance they may extend to a quarter of an hour, when poured out at large. But some days I begrudge this time as too much, and omit the preface of my prayer, with some passages conceived less material, and run two or three petitions into one, so contracting them to half a quarter of an hour.

Not long after, this also seems too long ; I decontract and abridge the abridgment of my prayers ; yea, (be it confessed to my shame and sorrow, that hereafter I may amend it,) too often I shrink my prayers to a minute, to a moment, to a—Lord, have mercy upon me !





Scripture Observations.



I.

PRAYER MAY PREACH.

FATHER, I thank thee (said our Saviour, being ready to raise Lazarus) that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always; but because of the people that stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.* It is lawful for ministers in their public prayers to insert passages for the edifying of their auditors, at the same time petitioning God and in-

* John xi. 41, 42.

forming their hearers. For our Saviour, glancing his eyes at the people's instruction, did no whit hinder the steadfastness of his look lifted up to his Father.

When, before sermon, I pray for my sovereign and master, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, in all causes, and over all persons, &c., some, who omit it themselves, may censure it in me for superfluous. But never more need to teach men the king's title, and their own duty, that the simple may be informed, the forgetful remembered thereof, and that the affectedly ignorant, who will not take advice, may have all excuse taken from them. Wherefore, in pouring forth my prayers to God, well may I therein sprinkle some by-drops for the instruction of the people.

II.

THE VICIOUS MEAN.

Zophar, the Naamathite, mentioneth a

sort of men, in whose mouths wickedness is sweet ; they hide it under their tongues, they spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still in their mouths.* This furnisheth me with a tripartite division of men in the world.

The first and best are those who spit sin out, loathing it in their judgments, and leaving it in their practice.

The second sort, notoriously wicked, who swallow sin down, actually and openly committing it.

The third, endeavouring an expedient betwixt heaven and hell, neither do nor deny their lusts ; neither spitting them out nor swallowing them down, but rolling them under their tongues, epicurising thereon, in their filthy fancies and obscene speculations.

If God at the last day of judgment hath three hands, a right for the sheep, a left for the goats, the middle is most proper for these third sort of men. But both

* Job xx. 12, 13.

these latter kinds of sinners shall be confounded together. The rather because a sin thus rolled becomes so soft and supple, and the throat is so short and slippery a passage, that insensibly it may slide down from the mouth into the stomach; and contemplative wantonness quickly turns into practical uncleanness.

III.

STORE NO SORE.

Job had a custom to offer burnt-offerings according to the number of his sons; for he said, It may be that my sons in their feastings have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.* It may be, not, It must be; he was not certain, but suspected it. But now, what if his sons had not sinned? Was Job's labour lost, and his sacrifice of none effect? Oh no! only their property was altered; in case his sons were found faulty, his sacrifices for them were propi-

* Job i. 5.

tiatory, and through Christ obtained their pardon : in case they were innocent, his offerings were eucharistical, returning thanks to God's restraining grace for keeping his sons from such sins, which otherwise they would have committed.

I see, in all doubtful matters of devotion, it is wisest to be on the surest side; better both lock, and bolt, and bar it, than leave the least door of danger open. Hast thou done what is disputable whether it be well done? Is it a measuring cast whether it be lawful or no? So that thy conscience may seem in a manner to stand neuter, sue a conditional pardon out of the court of heaven; the rather because our self-love is more prone to flatter than our godly jealousy to suspect ourselves without a cause: with such humility Heaven is well pleased. For suppose thyself overcautious, needing no forgiveness in that particular, God will interpret the pardon thou prayest for to be the praises presented unto him.

IV.

LINE ON LINE.

Moses in God's name did counsel Joshua, Deut. xxxi. 23 : Be strong, and of a good courage, for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them. God immediately did command him, Josh. i. 6 : Be strong, and of a good courage; and again, ver. 7 : Only be thou strong and very courageous; and again, ver. 9 : Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. Lastly, the Reubenites and Gadites heartily desired him, ver. 18 : Only be strong and of a good courage.

Was Joshua a dunce or a coward? did his wit or his valour want an edge, that the same precept must so often be pressed upon him? No doubt neither; but God saw it needful that Joshua should have courage of proof, who was to encounter

both the froward Jew and the fierce Canaanite.

Though metal on metal, colour on colour, be false heraldry ; line on line, precept on precept,* is true divinity.

Be not therefore offended, O my soul, if the same doctrine be often delivered unto thee by different preachers : if the same precept, like the sword in Paradise, which turned every way,† doth hunt and haunt thee, tracing thee which way soever thou turnest, rather conclude that thou art deeply concerned in the practice thereof, which God hath thought fit should be so frequently inculcated into thee.

V.

OH, THE DEPTH !

Had I beheld Sodom in the beauty thereof, and had the angel told me that the same should be suddenly destroyed by a merciless element, I should certainly

* Is. xxviii. 10.

† Gen. iii. 24.

have concluded that Sodom should have been drowned; led thereunto by these considerations:—

1. It was situated in the plain of Jordan, a flat, low, level country.

2. It was well watered everywhere;* and where always there is water enough there may sometimes be too much.

3. Jordan had a quality in the first month to overflow all his banks.†

But no drop of moisture is spilt on Sodom—it is burnt to ashes. How wide are our conjectures when they guess at God's judgments! How far are his ways above our apprehension! Especially when wicked men, with the Sodomites, wander in strange sins, out of the road of common corruption, God meets them with strange punishments, out of the reach of common conception, not coming within the compass of a rational suspicion.

* Gen. iii. 10.

† 1 Chron. xii. 15.

VI.

SELF, SELF HURTER.

When God, at the first day of judgment, arraigned Eve, she transferred her fault on the serpent which beguiled her.* This was one of the first-fruits of our depraved nature. But ever after regenerate men in Scripture, making the confession of their sins, (whereof many precedents,) cast all the fault on themselves alone : yea, David when he numbered the people, though it be expressed that Satan provoked him thereunto,† and though David probably might be sensible of his temptation, yet he never accused the devil, but derived all the guilt on himself : I it is that have sinned ;‡ good reason, for Satan hath no impulsive power, he may strike fire till he be weary, (if his malice can be weary ;) except man's corruption brings the tinder, the match cannot be lighted. Away, then, with that plea of

* Gen. iii. 13.

† 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

‡ 1 Chron. xxi. 17.;

course. THE DEVIL OWED ME A SHAME. Owe thee he might, but pay thee he could not, unless thou wert as willing to take his black money as he to tender it.

VII.

GAD, BEHOLD, A TROOP COMETH.

The Amalekite who brought the tidings to David began with truth, rightly reporting the overthrow of the Israelites? * Cheaters must get some credit before they can cozen; and all falsehood, if not founded in some truth, would not be fixed in any belief.

But, proceeding, he told six lies successively :—

1. That Saul called him.
2. That he came at his call.
3. That Saul demanded who he was.
4. That he returned his answer.
5. That Saul commanded him to kill him.
6. That he killed him accordingly.

* 2 Sam. i.

✓ A wilful falsehood told is a cripple not able to stand by itself without some to support it; it is easy to tell a lie, hard to tell but a lie.

Lord, if I be so unhappy to relate a falsehood, give me to recall it or repent of it. It is said of the pismires, that to prevent the growing (and so the corrupting) of that corn which they hoard up for the winter provision, they bite off both the ends thereof, wherein the generating power of the grain doth consist. When I have committed a sin, oh, let me so order it that I may destroy the procreation thereof, and, by a true sorrow, condemn it to a blessed barrenness.

VIII.

OUT MEANS, IN MIRACLES.

When the angel brought St Peter out of prison, the iron gate opened of its own accord. But coming to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, he was fain to

stand before the door and knock. When iron gave obedience, how can wood make opposition ?

The answer is easy. There was no man to open the iron gate, but a portress was provided of course to unlock the door ; God would not therefore shew his finger where men's hands were appointed to do the work. Heaven will not superinstitute a miracle where ordinary means were formerly in peaceable possession. But if they either depart or resign (ingenuously confessing their insufficiency,) then miracles succeed in their vacancy.

Lord, if only wooden obstacles (such as can be removed by might of man) hindered our hope of peace, the arm of flesh might relieve us. But, alas, they are iron obstructions, that come not within human power to take away ! No proud flesh shall therefore presumptuously pretend to any part of the praise, but ascribe it solely to thyself, if now thou shouldst be pleased, after seven years' hard apprenticeship in civil wars,

miraculously to burn our indentures and restore us to our former liberty.

IX.

MILITARY MOURNING.

Some may wonder at the strange incoherence in the words and actions, 2 Sam. i. 17.

And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son: Also, he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow.

But the connexion is excellent. For that is the most soldier-like sorrow which, in midst of grief, can give order for revenge on such as have slain their friends.

Our general fast was first appointed to bemoan the massacre of our brethren in Ireland. But it is in vain to have a finger in the eye if we have not also a sword in the other hand; such tame lamenting of lost friends is but lost lamentation. We must bend our bows in the camp, as our

knees in the churches, and second our posture of piety with martial provisions.

X.

NO STOOL OF WICKEDNESS.

Sometimes I have disputed with myself which of the two was most guilty, David, who said in haste, All men are liars,* or that wicked man who sat and spake against his brother, and slandered his own mother's son.†

David seems the greater offender; for mankind might have an action of defamation against him, yea, he might justly be challenged for giving all men the lie. But mark, David was in haste; he spake it *in transitu*, when he was passing, or rather posting by; or, if you please, not David, but David's haste rashly vented the words. Whereas the other sat, a sad, solemn, serious, premeditate, deliberate posture, his malice had a full blow, with a steady hand,

* Ps. cxiv. 11.

† Ps. i. 20.

at the credit of his brother. Not to say that SAT carries with it the countenance of a judicial proceeding, as if he made a session or bench-business thereof, as well condemning as accusing unjustly.

Lord, pardon my cursory, and preserve me from sedentary sins. If, in haste or heat of passion, I wrong any, give me at leisure to ask thee and them forgiveness. But, oh! let me not sit by it, studiously to plot or project mischief to any out of malice prepense. To shed blood in cool blood is blood with a witness.

XI.

BY DEGREES.

See by what stairs wicked Ahaz* did climb up to the height of profaneness.

First, He saw an idolatrous altar at Damascus.† Our eyes, when gazing on sinful objects, are out of their calling and God's keeping.

* 2 Kings xvi.

† Ibid. ver. 10.

Secondly, He liked it. There is a secret fascination in superstition, and our souls are soon bewitched with the gaudiness of false service from the simplicity of God's worship.

Thirdly, He made the like to it. And herein Uriah the priest* (patron and chaplain well met) was the midwife to deliver the mother altar of Damascus of a babe, like unto it, at Jerusalem.

Fourthly, He sacrificed on it.† What else could be expected, but that, when he had tuned this new instrument of idolatry, he would play upon it?

Fifthly, He commanded the people to do the like.‡ Not content to confine it to his personal impiety.

Lastly, He removed God's altar away. That venerable altar, by Divine appointment peaceably possessed of the place for two hundred years and upwards, must now be violently ejected by a usurping upstart.

* 2 Kings xvi. 11.

† Ibid. ver. 13.

‡ Ibid. ver. 15.

No man can be stark naught at once. Let us stop the progress of sin in our soul at the first stage; for the farther it goes the faster it will increase.

XII.

THE BEST BEDMAKER. ✓

When a good man is ill at ease, God promiseth to make all his bed in his sickness.* Pillow, bolster, head, feet, sides, all his bed. Surely that God who made him knows so well his measure and temper as to make his bed to please him. Herein his art is excellent, not fitting the bed to the person, but the person to the bed; infusing patience into him.

But, oh! how shall God make my bed, who have no bed of mine own to make? Thou fool, he can make thy not having a bed to be a bed unto thee. When Jacob slept on the ground,† who would not have had his hard lodging, therewithal to have

* Ps. xli. 3.

† Gen. xxviii. 12.

his heavenly dream? Yea, the poor woman in Jersey,* who, in the reign of Queen Mary, was delivered of a child as she was to be burnt at the stake, may be said to be brought to bed in the fire. Why not? If God's justice threatened to cast Jezebel into a bed of fire,† why might not his mercy make the very flames a soft bed to that his patient martyr?

XIII.

WHEN BEGUN, ENDED.

The Scripture giveth us a very short account of some battles, as if they were flights without fights, and the armies parted as soon as met, as Gen. xiv. 10; 1 Sam. xxxi. 1; 2 Chron. xxv. 22.

Some will say the Spirit gives in only the sum of the success, without any particular passages in achieving it. But there is more in it that so little is said of the fight. For some time the question of the victory is

* Foxe's Martyrs, vol. 3.

† Rev. ii, 22.

not disputed at all, but the bare propounding decides it. The stand of pikes oft-times no stand, and the footmen so fitly called as making more use of their feet than their hands. And when God sends a qualm of fear over the soldiers' hearts, it is not all the skill and valour of their commanders can give them a cordial.

Our late war hath given us some instances hereof. Yet let not men tax their armies for cowardice, it being probable that the badness of such as staid at home of their respective sides, had such influence on those in field, that soldiers' hearts might be fear-broken by the score of their sins who were no soldiers.

XIV.

TOO LATE, TOO LATE.

The elder brother laid a sharp and true charge against his brother prodigal for his riot and luxury.* This nothing affected

* Luke xv. 29.

his father ; the mirth, meat, music at the feast, were, notwithstanding, no whit abated. Why so ? Because the elder brother was the younger in this respect, and came too late. The other had got the speed of him, having first accused himself, (nine verses before,) and already obtained his pardon.

Satan (to give him his due) is my brother, and my elder by creation. Sure I am he will be my grievous accuser. I will endeavour to prevent him, first condemning myself to God my father. So shall I have an act of indemnity before he can enter his action against me.

XV.

LAWFUL STEALTH.

I find two (husband and wife) both stealing, and but one of them guilty of felony. And Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's,* and Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian. In

* Gen. xxxi. 19.

the former, a complication of theft, lying, sacrilege, and idolatry ; in the latter, no sin at all. For what our conscience tells us is lawful, and our discretion dangerous, it is both conscience and discretion to do it with all possible secrecy. It was as lawful for Jacob in that case privately to steal away, as it is for that man who finds the sunshine too hot for him to walk in the shade.

God keep us from the guilt of Rachel's stealth. But for Jacob's stealing away, one may confess the fact, but deny the fault therein. Some are said to have gotten their life for a prey, if any, in that sense, have preyed on (or, if you will, plundered) their own liberty, stealing away from the place where they conceived themselves in danger, none can justly condemn them.

XVI.

TEXT IMPROVED.

I heard a preacher take for his text: Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? * I wondered what he would make thereof, fearing he would starve his auditors for want of matter. But hence he observed:—

1. The silliest and simplest, being wronged, may justly speak in their own defence.

2 Worst men have a good title to their own goods. Balaam a sorcerer; yet the ass confesseth twice he was his.

3. They who have done many good offices, and fail in one, are often not only unrewarded for former service, but punished for that one offence.

4. When the creatures, formerly offi-

* Num. xxii. 30.

cious to serve us, start from their wonted obedience, (as the earth to become barren, and their pestilential,) man ought to reflect on his own sin as the sole cause thereof.

How fruitful are the seeming barren places of Scripture. Bad ploughmen that make balks of such ground. Wheresoever the surface of God's Word doth not laugh and sing with corn, there the heart thereof within is merry with mines, affording, where not plain matter, hidden mysteries.

XVII.

THE ROYAL BEARING.

God is said to have brought the Israelites out of Egypt on eagles' wings.* Now eagles, when removing their young ones, have a different posture from other fowl, proper to themselves, (fit it is that there should be a distinction betwixt sovereign and subjects,) carrying their prey in their talons, but young ones on their backs, so

* Exod. xix. 4.

interposing their whole bodies betwixt them and harm. The old eagle's body is the young eagle's shield, and must be shot through before her young ones can be hurt.

Thus God, in saving the Jews, put himself betwixt them and danger. Surely God, so loving under the law, is no less gracious in the gospel: our souls are better secured, not only above his wings, but in his body; your life is hid with Christ in God.* No fear, then, of harm; God first must be pierced before we can be prejudiced.

XVIII.

NONE TO HIM.

It is said of our Saviour, His fan is in his hand.† How well it fits him, and he it! Could Satan's clutches snatch the fan, what work would he make! He would fan as he doth winnow,‡ in a tem-

* Col. iii. 3.

† Matt. iii. 12.

‡ Luke xxii. 31.

pest, yea, in a whirlwind, and blow the best away. Had man the fan in his hand, especially in these distracted times, out goes for chaff all opposite to the opinions of his party. Seeming sanctity will carry it away from such who, with true but weak grace, have ill natures and eminent corruptions.

There is a kind of danel, called *lolium murinum*, because so counterfeiting corn that even the mice themselves (experience should make them good tasters) are sometimes deceived therewith. Hypocrites, in like manner, so act holiness that they pass for saints before men, whose censures often barn up the chaff, and burn up the grain.

Well, then, Christ for my share. Good luck have he with his honour. The fan is in so good a hand it cannot be mended. Only his hand who knows hearts is proper for that employment.

XIX.

HUMILITY.

It is a strange passage, Rev. vii. 13, 14: And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these who are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they who have come out of great tribulation, &c.

How comes the elder, when asking a question, to be said to answer? On good reason; for his query in effect was a resolution. He asked St John, not because he thought he could, but knew he could not answer; that John's ingenuous confession of his ignorance might invite the elder to inform him.

As his question is called an answer, so God's commands are grants. When he enjoins us, Repent, believe, it is only to draw from us a free acknowledgment of

our impotency to perform his commands. This confession being made by us, what he enjoins he will enable us to do. Man's owning his weakness is the only stock for God thereon to graft the grace of his assistance.





Meditations on the Times.



I.

NAME-GENERAL.

EBER had a son born in the days when the earth was divided.* Conceive we it just after the confusion of tongues, when mankind were parcelled out into several colonies. Wherefore Eber, to perpetuate the memory of so famous an accident happening at the birth of his son, called him Peleg, which, in the Hebrew tongue, signifieth partition, or division.

* Gen. x. 25.

We live in a land and age of dissension. ✓
Counties, cities, towns, villages, families,
all divided in opinions, in affections. Each
man almost divided from himself, with
fears and distractions. Of all the children
born in England within these last five
years, and brought to the font (or, if that
displease, to the bason) to be baptized,
every male may be called Peleg, and female
Palgah, in the sad memorial of the time of
their nativity.

II.

WOEFUL WEALTH.

Barbarous is the custom of some English
people on the seaside, to prey on the goods
of poor shipwrecked merchants. But more
devilish in their design, who make false
fires to undirect seamen in a tempest, that
thereby from the right road they may be
misled into danger and destruction.

England hath been tossed with a hurri-
cane of a civil war. Some men are said

to have gotten great wealth thereby. But it is an ill leap when men grow rich *per saltum*, taking their rise from the miseries of a land to which their own sins have contributed their share. Those are far worse (and may not such be found?) who, by cunning insinuations, and false glossings, have, in these dangerous days, trained and betrayed simple men into mischief.

Can their pelf prosper, not got by valour or industry, but deceit? Surely it cannot be wholesome, when every morsel of their meat is mummy, (good physic, but bad food,) made of the corpses of men's estates. Nor will it prove happy; it being to be feared that such who have been enriched with other men's ruin will be ruined by their own riches. The child of ten years is old enough to remember the beginning of such men's wealth, and the man of threescore and ten is young enough to see the ending thereof.

III.

A NEW PLOT

When Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, some might expect that his disciples would have done some great matter in revenge of their master's death. But see how they behave themselves: And his disciples came and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. And was this all? and what was all this? Alas, poor men! it was some solace to their sorrowful souls that they might lament their loss to a fast friend, who, though for the present unable to help, was willing to pity them.

Hast thou thy body unjustly imprisoned, or thy goods violently detained, or thy credit causelessly defamed? I have a design whereby thou shalt revenge thyself—even go and tell Jesus. Make to him a plain and true report of the manner and measure of thy sufferings: especially there

being a great difference betwixt Jesus then clouded in the flesh, and Jesus now shining in glory, having now as much pity and more power to redress thy grievances. I know it is counted but a cowardly trick for boys, when beaten but by their equals, to cry that they will tell their father. But, during the present necessity, it is both the best wisdom and valour, even to complain to thy Father in heaven, who will take thy case into his serious consideration.

IV.

PROVIDENCE.

Marvellous is God's goodness in preserving the young ostriches. For the old one leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, forgetting that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.* But Divine Providence so disposeth it, that the bare nest

* Job xxxix. 14, 15.

hatcheth the eggs, and the warmth of the sandy ground discloseth them.

Many parents, who otherwise would have been loving pelicans, are, by these unnatural wars, forced to be ostriches to their own children, leaving them to the narrow mercy of the wide world. I am confident that these orphans (so may I call them whilst their parents are alive) shall be comfortably provided for. When worthy Master Samuel Hern, famous for his living, preaching, and writing, lay on his deathbed, (rich only in goodness and children,) his wife made much womanish lamentation, what should hereafter become of her little ones: Peace, sweetheart, said he, that God who feedeth the ravens will not starve the Herns.* A speech censured as light by some, observed by others as prophetic, as indeed it came to pass that they were well disposed of.

Despair not, therefore, O thou parent, of God's blessing for having many of his

* Psalm cxlvii. 9.

blessings, a numerous offspring. But depend on his providence for their maintenance: find thou but faith to believe it, he will find means to effect it.

V.

COALS * FOR FAGOT.

In the days of King Edward the Sixth, when Bonner was kept in prison, reverend Ridley, having his bishopric of London, would never go to dinner at Fulham without the company of Bonner's mother and sister; † the former always sitting in a chair at the upper end of the table; these guests were as constant as bread and salt at the board—no meal could be made without them.

Oh, the meekness and mildness of such men as must make martyrs! Active charity always goes along with passive obedience.

How many ministers' wives and children

* Prov. xxv. 22.

† Foxe's Martyrol., vol. iii., p. 432.

now-a-days are outed of house and home, ready to be starved! How few are invited to their tables who hold the sequestrations of their husbands' or fathers' benefices! Yea, many of them are so far from being bountiful, that they are not just, denying or detaining from those poor souls that pittance which the parliament hath allotted for their maintenance.

VI.

FUGITIVES OVERTAKEN.

The city of Geneva is seated in the marches of several dominions, France, Savoy, Switzerland; now it is a fundamental law in that signiory, to give free access to all offenders, yet so as to punish their offence, according to the custom of that place wherein the fault was committed. This necessary severity doth sweep their state from being the sink of sinners, the rendezvous of rogues, and

head-quarters of all malefactors, which otherwise would fly thither in hope of indemnity. Herein I highly approve the discipline of Geneva.

If we should live to see churches of several governments permitted in England, it is more than probable that many offenders, not out of conscience, but to escape censures, would fly from one congregation to another. What Nabal said sullenly and spitefully,* one may sadly foresee and foresee of this land, Many servants now-a-days will break every man from his master; many guilty persons, abandoning that discipline under which they were bred and brought up, will shift and shelter themselves under some new model of government. Well were it, then, if every man, before he be admitted a member of a new congregation, do therein first make satisfaction for such scandalous sins whereof he stands justly charged in that church which he deserted. This would conduce

* 1 Sam. xxv. 10.

to the advancing of virtue and the retrenching of notorious licentiousness.

VII.

BOTH AND NEITHER.

A city was built in Germany, upon the river Weser, by Charles the emperor and Vuidekind, first Christian duke of Saxony; and because both contributed to the structure thereof, it was called MINE-THINE,* (at this day, by corrupt pronounciation, Minden,) to shew the joint interest both had in the place.

Send, Lord, in thy due time, such a peace in this land as prince and people may share therein; that the sovereign might have what he justly calls mine, his lawful prerogative; and leave to the subjects their propriety. Such may be truly termed an accommodation which is *ad commodum utriusque*—for the benefit of both parties concerned therein.

* Munster's *Cosmog.*, lib. iii., cap. 450.

VIII.

FED WITH FASTING.

The salmon may pass for the riddle of the river. The oldest fisherman never as yet met with any meat in the maw thereof, thereby to advantage his conjecture on what bill of fare that fish feedeth. It eats not flies with the perch, nor swallows worms with the roach, nor sucketh dew with oysters, nor devoureth his fellow-fishes with the pike : what hath it in the water but the water? yet salmons grow great, and very fat in their season.

How do many (exiles in their own country) subsist now-a-days on nothing; and wandering in a wilderness of want, (except they have manna miraculously from heaven,) they have no meat on earth from their own means. At what ordinary, or rather extraordinary, do they diet, that for all this have cheerful faces, light hearts, and merry countenances? Surely some secret

comfort supports their souls. Such never desire but to make one meal all the days of their lives on the continual feast of a good conscience.* The fattest capons yield but sad merry thoughts to the greedy glutton, in comparison of those delightful dainties which this dish daily affords such as feed upon it.

IX.

BARE IN FAT PASTURE.

Foresters have informed me that out-lodging deer are seldom seen to be so fat as those which keep themselves within the park. Whereof they assign this reason: that those stragglers, though they have more ground to range over, more grass and grain to take their repast upon, yet they are in constant fear, as if conscious that they are trespassers, being out of the protection, because out of the pale of the park. This makes their eyes and ears always to

* Prov xv. 15.

stand sentinels for their mouths, lest the master of the ground pursue them for the damage done unto him.

Are there any who unjustly possess the houses of others? Surely such can never with quiet and comfort enjoy either their places or themselves. They always listen to the least noise of news, suspecting the right owner should be re-estimated, whose restitution of necessity infers the other's ejection. Lord, grant that though my means be never so small, they may be my means, not wrongfully detained from others having a truer title unto them.

X.

MUCH GOOD DO YOU.

On Nicias, a philosopher, having his shoes stolen from him, May they, said he, fit his feet that took them away.* A wish at the first view very harmless; but there was that in it which poisoned his charity into a malicious revenge. For he himself

* Plutarch's Morals.

had hurled or crooked feet, so that in effect he wished the thief to be lame.

Whosoever hath plundered me of my books and papers, I freely forgive him; and desire that he may fully understand and make good use thereof, wishing him more joy of them than he hath right to them. Nor is there any snake under my herbs, nor have I (as Nicias) any reservation or latent sense to myself, but from my heart do desire that to all purposes and intents my books may be beneficial unto him. Only requesting him that one passage in his (lately my) Bible [namely, Eph. iv. 28] may be taken into his serious consideration.

XI.

✓ THE USE OF THE ALPHABET.

There was, not long since, a devout but ignorant Papist dwelling in Spain. He perceived a necessity of his own prayers to God, besides the Pater-Nosters, Ave-Marias, &c., used of course in the Romish Church.

But so simple was he, that how to pray he knew not. Only, every morning, humbly bending his knees, and lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven, he would deliberately repeat the alphabet. And now, said he, O good God, put these letters together to spell syllables, to spell words, to make such sense as may be most to thy glory and my good.

In these distracted times I know what generals to pray for. God's glory, truth, and peace, his majesty's honour, privileges of parliament, liberty of subjects, &c. But, when I descend to particulars, when, how, by whom I should desire these things to be effected, I may fall to that poor pious man's A, B, C, D, E, &c.

XII.

THE GOOD EFFECT OF A BAD CAUSE.

God, in the Levitical law, gave reward to the woman causelessly suspected of her jealous husband, that the bitter water,

which she was to drink in the priest's presence, should not only do her no harm, but also procure her children, if barren before ;* that water (drunk by her to quench the fire of her husband's jealousy) proved like the Spa unto her, so famous for causing fruitfulness. Thus her innocence was not only cleared, but crowned.

His Gracious Majesty hath been suspected to be popishly inclined. A suspicion like those mushrooms which Pliny recounts amongst the miracles in nature, because growing without a root.† Well, he hath passed his purgation—a bitter morning's draught hath he taken down for many years together.

See the operation thereof—his constancy in the Protestant religion hath not only been assured to such who unjustly were jealous of him, but also, by God's blessing, he daily grows greater in men's hearts, pregnant with the love and affection of his subjects.

* Num. v. 28.

† Nat. Hist., lib. xix., cap. 2.

XIII.

THE CHILD-MAN.

John Gerson, the pious and learned Chancellor of Paris, beholding and bemoaning the general corruption of his age, in doctrine and manners, was wont to get a choir of little children about him, and to entreat them to pray to God in his behalf,* supposing their prayers least defiled with sin, and most acceptable to Heaven.

Men now-a-days are so infected with malice, that little children are the best chaplains to pray for their parents. But, oh, where shall such be found, not resenting the faults and factions of their fathers? Gerson's plot will not take effect. I will try another way.

I will make my address to the holy Child Jesus,† so is he styled, even when glorified in heaven; not because he is still under age, (like popish pictures, placing him in

* In his life,—*juxta finem.*

† Acts iv. 27.

his mother's arms, and keeping him in his constant infancy,) but because, with the strength and perfection of a man he hath the innocency and humility of a child. Him only will I employ to intercede for me.

XIV.

WORSE BEFORE BETTER.

Strange was the behaviour of our Saviour towards his beloved Lazarus; informed by a messenger of his sickness, he abode two days still in the place where he was.* Why so slow? bad sending him on a dying man's errands. But the cause was because Lazarus was not bad enough for Christ to cure; intending not to recover him from sickness, but revive him from death, to make the glory of the miracle greater.

England doth lie desperately sick of a violent disease in the bowels thereof. Many

* John xi. 6.

messengers we despatch (monthly fasts, weekly sermons, daily prayers) to inform God of our sad condition. He still stays in the same place, yea, which is worse, seems to go backward, for every day less likelihood, less hope of help. May not this be the reason that our land must yet be reduced to more extremity, that God may have the higher honour of our deliverance?

XV.

ALL SIN, ALL SUFFER.

The mariners that guided the ship in the tempest (Acts xxvii. 30-32) had a design for their own safety with the ruin of the rest; intending (under pretence of casting out an anchor) to escape in a boat by themselves. But the soldiers prevented their purpose, and cut off the cord of the boat, and let it fall into the sea. One and all, all sink, or all save. Herein their martial law did a piece of exemplary justice.

Do any intend willingly (without special cause) to leave the land, so to avoid that misery which their sins, with others', have drawn upon it? might I advise them, better mourn in, than move out of, sad Zion. Hang out the scarlet lace at the casement,* (eyes made red with sorrow for sin,) but slide not down out of the window without better warrant. But if they be disposed to depart, and leave their native soil, let them take heed their fly-boat meets not with such soldiers as will send them back, with shame and sorrow, into the ship again.

XVI.

EAT WORTHILY.

Saul, being in full pursuit of the flying Philistines, made a law that no Israelite should eat until evening.† But it was the judgment of Jonathan that the army, if permitted to eat, had done greater execu-

* Josh. ii.

† 1 Sam. xiv. 24.

tion on their enemies. For time so lost was gained, being laid out in the necessary refecation of their bodies.

Yea, mark the issue of their long fasting. The people, at night, coming with ravenous appetites, did eat the flesh with the blood, to the provoking of God's anger.*

Many English people, having conquered some fleshly lusts which fight against their souls, were still chasing them, in hope finally to subdue them. Was it a pious or a politic design to forbid such the receiving of the sacrament, their spiritual food?

I will not positively conclude that such, if suffered to strengthen themselves with that heavenly repast, had thereby been enabled more effectually to cut down their corruptions. Only two things I will desire:—

First, That such Jonathans who, by breaking this custom, have found benefit to themselves, may not be condemned by

* 1 Sam. xiv. 32.

others. Secondly, I shall pray that two hungry years make not the third a glutton. That communicants, two twelvemonths together forbidden the Lord's Supper, come not (when admitted thereunto) with better stomach than heart, more greediness than preparation?

XVII.

DEVOTIONS DUPLICATE.

When the Jewish Sabbath, in the primitive times, was newly changed into the Christian's Lord's-day, many devout people twisted both together in their observation, abstaining from servile works, and keeping both Saturday and Sunday wholly for holy employments.

During these civil wars, Wednesday and Friday fasts have been appointed by different authorities. What harm had it been if they had been both generally observed?

But, alas! when two messengers, being sent together on the same errand, fall out

and fight by the way, will not the work be worse done than if none were employed? In such a pair of fasts it is to be feared that the divisions of our affections rather would increase than abate God's anger against us.

Two negatives make an affirmative. Days of humiliation are appointed for men to deny themselves and their sinful lusts. But do not our two fasts more peremptorily affirm and avouch our mutual malice and hatred? God forgive us, we have cause enough to keep ten, but not care enough to keep one monthly day of humiliation.

XVIII.

LAW TO THEMSELVES.

Some sixty years since, in the University of Cambridge, it was solemnly debated betwixt the heads, to debar young scholars of that liberty allowed them at Christmas, as inconsistent with the discipline of students. But some grave governors maintained the good use thereof, because thereby

in twelve days they more discover the dispositions of scholars than in twelve months before. That a vigilant virtue indeed which would be early up at prayers and study when all authority to punish lay asleep.

Vice, these late years, hath kept open house in England. Welcomed all comers without any examination. No penance for the adulterer, stocks for the drunkard, whip for the petty larcener, brand for the felon, gallows for the murderer.

God all this time tries us as he did Hezekiah, that he might know all that is in our hearts.* Such as now are chaste, sober, just, true, shew themselves actuated with a higher principle of piety than the bare avoiding of punishment.

XIX.

A NEW DISEASE.

There is a disease of infants (and an infant-disease having scarcely as yet gotten

* 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

a proper name in Latin) called the rickets. Wherein the head waxeth too great, whilst the legs and lower parts wain too little. A woman in the west hath happily healed many by cauterising the vein behind the ear. How proper the remedy for the malady I engage not : experience of time's outdoing art, whilst we behold the cure easily affected, and the natural cause thereof hardly assigned.

Have not many now-a-days the same sickness in their souls ? their heads swelling to a vast proportion, and they wonderfully enabled with knowledge to discourse ? But, alas, how little their legs, poor their practice, and lazy their walking in a godly conversation ! Shall I say that such may be cured by searing the vein in their head, not to hurt their hearing, but hinder the itching of their ears ?

Indeed his tongue deserves to be burnt that talks of searing the ears of others ; for faith cometh by hearing. But I would have men not to fewer sermons, but hear

more in hearing fewer sermons. Less preaching better heard (reader, lay the emphasis not on the word *less*, but on the word *better*) would make a wiser and stronger Christian, digesting the word from his heart to practise it in his conversation.





Meditations on all Kind of Prayers.



I.

NEWLY AWAKED.

BY the Levitical law, the firstling of every clean creature which opened the matrix was holy to God.* By the moral analogy thereof, this first glance of mine eyes is due to him. By the custom of this kingdom, there accrueth to the landlord a fine and heriot from his tenant taking a farther estate in his lease. I hold from God this clay cottage of my body (a homely tenement, but may I in some mea-

* Exod. xxxiv. 19.

sure be assured of a better before outed of this.) Now, being raised from last night's sleep I may seem to renew a life. What shall I pay to my landlord? even the best quick creature which is to be found on my barren copyhold, namely, the calves of my lips, praising him for his protection over me. More he doth not ask, less I cannot give; yea, such is his goodness and my weakness, that before I can give him thanks he giveth me to be thankful.

II.

FAMILY PRAYER.

Long have I searched the Scriptures to find a positive precept enjoining, or precedent observing, daily prayer in a family; yet hitherto have found none proper for my purpose. Indeed I read that there was a yearly sacrifice offered at Bethlehem for the family of Jesse;* but if hence we should infer household holy duties, others

* 1 Sam. xx. 29.

would conclude they should only be annual. And whereas it is said, Pour out thine indignation on the heathen, and on the families which have not called on thy name; the word taken there in a large acceptation, reproveth rather the want of national, than domestical service of God.

But let not profaneness improve itself, or censure family prayer for will-worship, as wanting a warrant in God's Word. For where God enjoineth a general duty, as to serve and fear him, there all particular means (whereof prayer a principal) tending thereunto are commanded. And surely the pious households of Abraham,* Joshua,† and Cornelius,‡ had some holy exercises to themselves, as broader than their personal devotion, so narrower than the public service, just adequate to their own private family.

* Gen. xviii. 19.

‡ Acts x. 2.

† Josh. xxiv. 15.

III.

SELF WITHOUT OTHER SELF.

Some loving wife may perchance be (though not angry with) grieved at her husband for excluding her from his private prayers; thus thinking with herself: Must I be discommoned from my husband's devotion? what, several closet-chapels for those of the same bed and board? Are not our credits embarked in the same bottom, so that they swim or sink together? May I not be admitted an auditor at his petitions, were it only to say amen thereunto?

But let such a one seriously consider what the prophet saith: The family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart.* Personal private faults must be privately confessed. It is not meet she should know all the bosom

* Zech. xii. 12.

sins of him in whose bosom she lieth. Perchance, being now offended for not hearing her husband's prayers, she would be more offended if she heard them. Nor hath she just cause to complain, seeing herein Nathan's wife is equal with Nathan himself; what liberty she alloweth is allowed her, and may, as well as her husband, claim the privilege privately and apart to pour forth her soul unto God in her daily devotions.

Yet man and wife at other times ought to communicate in their prayers, all others excluded.

IV.

GROANS.

How comes it to pass that groans made in men by God's Spirit cannot be uttered? I find two reasons thereof. First, Because those groans are so low and little, so faint, frail, and feeble, so next to nothing, these still-born babes only breathe without crying.

Secondly, Because so much diversity, yea, contrariety of passion, is crowded within the compass of a groan, they are stayed from being expressive, and the groans become unutterable.

How happy is their condition who have God for their interpreter! who not only understands what they do, but what they would say. Daniel could tell the meaning of the dream which Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten. God knows the meaning of those groans which never as yet knew their own meaning, and understands the sense of those sighs which never understood themselves.

V.

EJACULATIONS, THEIR USE.

Ejaculations are short prayers darted up to God on emergent occasions. If no other artillery had been used these last seven years in England, I will not affirm more souls had been in heaven, but fewer

corpses had been buried in earth. Oh that, with David, we might have said, My heart is fixed,* being less busied about fixing of muskets.

The principal use of ejaculations is against the fiery darts of the devil.† Our adversary injects (how he doth it God knows, that he doth it we know) bad motions into our hearts; and that we may be as nimble with our antidotes as he with his poisons, such short prayers are proper and necessary. In barred havens, so choked up with the envious sands that great ships, drawing many feet of water, cannot come near, lighter and lesser pinnaces may freely and safely arrive. When we are time-bound, place-bound, or person-bound, so that we cannot compose ourselves to make a large solemn prayer, this is the right instant for ejaculations, whether orally uttered, or only poured forth inwardly in the heart.

* Ps. lvii. 7

† Eph. vi. 16.

VI.

THEIR PRIVILEGE.

Ejaculations take not up any room in the soul. They give liberty of calling, so that at the same instant one may follow his proper vocation. The husbandman may dart forth an ejaculation, and not make a balk the more. The seaman, nevertheless, steers his ship right in the darkest night. Yea, the soldier at the same time may shoot out his prayer to God, and aim his pistol at his enemy, the one better hitting the mark for the other.

The field wherein bees feed is no whit the barer for their biting; when they have taken their full repast on flowers or grass, the ox may feed, the sheep fat, on their reversions. The reason is because those little chemists distil only the refined part of the flower, leaving the grosser substance thereof. So ejaculations bind not men to any bodily observance, only busy the

spiritual half, which maketh them consistent with the prosecution of any other employment.

VII.

EXTEMPORARY PRAYERS.

In extemporary prayer, what men most admire God least regardeth, namely—the volubility of the tongue. Herein a Tertullus may equal, yea, exceed, St Paul himself, whose speech was but mean.* Oh, it is the heart keeping time and tune with the voice which God listeneth unto. Otherwise the nimblest tongue tires, and loudest voice grows dumb before it comes half-way to heaven. Make it, said God to Moses, in all things like the pattern in the mount.† Only the conformity of the words with the mind, mounted up in heavenly thoughts, is acceptable to God. The gift of extemporary prayer, ready utterance, may be bestowed on a reprobate,

* 2 Cor. x. 10.

† Heb. xviii. 5.

but the grace thereof (religious affections) is only given to God's servants.

VIII.

THEIR CAUSELESS SCANDAL.

Some lay it to the charge of extemporary prayers, as if it were a diminution to God's majesty to offer them unto him, because (alluding to David's expression to Ornan the Jebusite*) they cost nothing, but come without any pains or industry to provide them. A most false aspersion.

Surely preparation of the heart (though not premeditation of every word) is required thereunto. And grant the party praying at that very instant fore-studieth not every expression; yet surely he hath formerly laboured with his heart and tongue too, before he attained that dexterity of utterance, properly and readily to express himself. Many hours in night no doubt he is waking, and was by himself practising

* 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

Scripture phrase, and the language of Canaan, whilst such as censure him for his laziness were fast asleep in their beds.

Suppose one should make an entertainment for strangers with flesh, fish, fowl, venison, fruit, all out of his own fold, field, ponds, park, orchard, will any say that this feast cost him nothing who made it? Surely, although all grew on the same, and for the present he bought nothing by the penny, yet he, or his ancestors for him, did at first dearly purchase these home-accommodations, whence that this entertainment did arise.

So the party who hath attained the faculty and facility of extemporaneous prayer, (the easy act of a laborious habit,) though at the instant not appearing to take pains, hath been formerly industrious with himself, or his parents with him, (in giving him pious education,) or else he had never acquired so great perfection, seeing only long practice makes the pen of a ready writer.

IX.

NIGHT PRAYER.

Death in Scripture is compared to sleep. Well then may my night prayer be resembled to making my will. I will be careful not to die intestate; as also not to defer my will-making till I am not *compos mentis*, till the lethargy of drowsiness seize upon me.

But, being in perfect memory, I bequeath my soul to God; the rather because I am sure the devil will accuse me when sleeping. Oh, the advantage of spirits above bodies! If our clay cottage be not cooled with rest, the roof falls a-fire. Satan hath no such need: the night is his fittest time.* Thus man's vacation is the term for the beasts of the forest; they move most whilst he lies quiet in his bed.

Lest, therefore, whilst sleeping, I be outlawed for want of appearance to Satan's

* Rev. xii. 10.

charge, I commit my cause to him who neither slumbers nor sleeps : ANSWER FOR ME, O MY GOD.

X.

A NOCTURNAL.

David, surveying the firmament, brake forth into this consideration : When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast created ; what is man, &c.*

How cometh he to mention the moon and stars, and omit the sun ? The other being but his pensioners, shining with that exhibition of light which the bounty of the sun allots them.

It is answered, This was David's night meditation, when the sun, departing to the other world, left the lesser lights only visible in heaven ; and as the sky is best beheld by day in the glory thereof, so it is best surveyed by night in the variety of the same.

* Ps. viii. 3.

Night was made for man to rest in. But when I cannot sleep, may I, with the Psalmist, entertain my waking with good thoughts. Not to use them as opium, to invite my corrupt nature to slumber, but to bolt out bad thoughts, which otherwise would possess my soul.

XI.

SET PRAYERS.

Set prayers are prescribed forms of our own or others' composing; such are lawful for any, and needful for some to use.

Lawful for any. Otherwise God would not have appointed the priests (presumed of themselves best able to pray) a form of blessing the people; nor would our Saviour have set us his prayer, which (as the town-bushel is the standard both to measure corn and other bushels by) is both a prayer in itself and a pattern or platform of prayer. Such as accuse set forms to be

pinioning the wings of the dove, will by the next return affirm, that girdles and garters made to strengthen and adorn, are so many shackles and fetters, which hurt and hinder men's free motion.

Needful for some. Namely, for such who as yet have not attained (what all should endeavour) to pray extempore by the Spirit. But as little children, to whom the plainest and evenest room at first is a labyrinth, are so ambitious of going alone, that they scorn to take the guidance of a form or bench to direct them, but will adventure by themselves, though often to the cost of a knock or a fall; so many confess their weakness in denying to confess it, who, refusing to be beholden to a set form of prayer, prefer to say nonsense rather than nothing in their extempore expressions. More modesty, and no less piety, it had been for such men to have prayed longer with set forms, that they might pray better without them.

XII.

THE SAME AGAIN.

It is no base and beggarly shift, (arguing a narrow and necessitous heart,) but a piece of holy and heavenly thrift, often to use the same prayer again. Christ's practice is my directory herein, who the third time said the same words.*

A good prayer is not, like a stratagem in war, to be used but once. No, the oftener the better. The clothes of the Israelites, whilst they wandered forty years in the wilderness, never waxed old, as if made of *perpetuano* indeed. So a good prayer, though often used, is still fresh and fair in the ears and eyes of Heaven.

Despair not, then, thou simple soul, who hast no exchange of raiment, whose prayers cannot appear every day at Heaven's court in new clothes. Thou mayst be as good a subject, though not so great a gallant,

* Matt. xxvi. 44.

coming always in the same suit ; yea, perchance the very same which was thy father's and grandfather's before thee ; (a well-composed prayer is a good heir-loom in a family, and may hereditarily be descended to many generations.) But know thy comfort, thy prayer is well known to Heaven, to which it is a constant customer. Only add new, or new degrees of old affections thereunto, and it will be acceptable to God thus repaired, as if new erected.

XIII.

MIXT PRAYERS.

Mixt prayers are a methodical composition (no casual confusion) of extempore and premeditate prayers put together ; wherein the standers-still are the same, and the essential parts, (confession of sin, begging of pardon, craving grace for the future, thanking God for former favours, &c.) like the bones of the prayer, remain always unaltered. Whilst the movable

petitions (like the flesh and colour of thy prayers) are added, abridged, or altered, as God's Spirit adviseth and enableth us, according to the emergencies of present occasions.

In the midland sea, galleys are found to be most useful, which partly run on the legs of oars, and partly fly with the wings of sails, whereby they become serviceable both in a wind and in a calm. Such is the conveniency of mixt prayer, wherein infused and acquired graces meet together, and men partly move with the breath of the Holy Spirit, partly row on by their own industry. Such medley prayers are most useful, as having the steadiness of premeditate and the activity of extempore prayer joined together.

XIV.

TAKE YOUR COMPANY ALONG.

It is no disgrace for such who have the gift and grace of extemporary prayer some-

times to use a set form, for the benefit and behoof of others. Jacob, though he could have marched on at a man's pace, yet was careful not to over-drive the children, and ewes big with young.* Let ministers remember to bring up the rear in their congregations, that the meanest may go along with them in their devotions.

God could have created the world extempore, in a moment, but was pleased (as I may say) to make it premeditatedly, in a set method of six days, not for his own ease, but our instruction, that our heads and hearts might the better keep pace with his hands, to behold and consider his workmanship.

Let no man disdain to set his own nimbleness backward, that others may go along with him. Such degrading one's self is the quickest proceeding in piety, when men prefer the edification of others before their own credit and esteem.

* Gen. xxiii. 13.

XV.

PRAYER MUST BE QUOTIDIAN. ✓

Amongst other arguments enforcing the necessity of daily prayer, this is not the least, that Christ enjoins us to petition for daily bread. New bread we know is best; and in a spiritual sense, our bread, though itself as stale and mouldy as that of the Gibeonites, is every day new, because a new and hot blessing, as I might say, is daily begged, and bestowed of God upon it.

Manna must daily be gathered, and not provisionally be hoarded up. God expects that men every day address themselves unto him, by petitioning him for sustenance.

How contrary is this to the common practice of many. As camels in sandy countries are said to drink but once in seven days, and then *in præsens, præteritum, et futurum*, for time past, present, and to come, so many fumble this, last, and next week's devotion all in a prayer.

Yea, some defer all their praying till the last day.

Constantine had a conceit that because baptism washed away all sins, he would not be baptized till his deathbed, that so his soul might never lose the purity thereof, but immediately mount to heaven. But sudden death preventing him, he was not baptized at all, as some say, or only by an Arian bishop, as others affirm. If any erroneously, on the same supposition, put off their prayers to the last, let them take heed, lest long delayed, at last they prove either none at all or none in effect.

XVI.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

In this age we begin to think meanly of the Lord's Prayer; oh how basely may the Lord think of our prayers! Some will not forgive the Lord's Prayer for that passage therein, As we forgive them that trespass against us.

Others play the witches on this prayer. Witches are reported (amongst many other hellish observations, whereby they oblige themselves to Satan) to say the Lord's Prayer backwards. Are there not many, who, though they do not pronounce the syllables of the Lord's Prayer retrograde, (their discretion will not suffer them to be betrayed to such a nonsense sin,) yet they transpose it in effect, desiring their daily bread before God's kingdom come, preferring temporal benefits before heavenly blessings. Oh! if every one by this mark should be tried for a witch, how hard would it go with all of us. *Lamiarum plena sunt omnia.*

XVII.

ALL BEST.

At the siege and taking of New Carthage in Spain, there was dissension betwixt the soldiers about the crown mural due to him who first footed the walls of

the city—two pretended to the crown. Parts were taken, and the Roman army, siding in factions, was likely to fall foul, and mutually fight against itself. Scipio, the general, prevented the danger by providing two mural crowns,* giving one to each who claimed it, affirming that, on the examination of the proofs, both did appear to him at the same instant to climb the wall. Oh, let us not set several kinds of prayers at variance betwixt themselves which of them should be most useful, most honourable. All are most excellent at several times, crown-groans, crown-ejaculations, crown-extemporany, crown-set, crown-mixed prayer; I dare boldly say, He that in some measure loves not all kind of lawful prayers, loves no kind of lawful prayers. For if we love God the Father we can hate no ordinance, his child, though perchance an occasion may affect one above another.

* Plutarch, in Scipio's life, p. 1807.

XVIII.

ALL MANNER OF PRAYER.

It is an ancient stratagem of Satan (yet still he useth it, still men are cheated by it) to set God's ordinance at variance, as the disciples fell out amongst themselves, which of them should be the greatest. How hath the reader's pew been clashed against the preacher's pulpit, to the shaking almost of the whole church, whether that the word preached or read be most effectual to salvation. Also, whether the word preached or catechised be most useful. But no ordinance so abused as prayer. Prayer hath been set up against preaching, against catechising, against itself. Whether public or private, church or closet, set or extempore prayer the best. See how St Paul determines the controversy, *πάση προσευχῇ*, with all manner of prayer (so the Geneva translation) and supplication in

the Spirit.* Preferring none—commending all lawful prayer to our practice.

XIX.

TO GOD ALONE.

Amongst all manner of prayer to God, I find in Scripture neither promise, precept, nor precedent to warrant prayers to saints. And were there no other reason, this would encourage me to pray to Christ alone, because

St Paul struck Elymas blind; Christ made blind Bartimeus see. St Peter killed Ananias and Sapphira with his word; Christ with his word revived dead Lazarus. The disciples forbade the Syro-phœnician woman to call after Christ, Christ called unto her after they had forbidden her. All my Saviour's works are saving works, none extending to the death of mankind.

Surely Christ, being now in heaven,

* Eph. vi. 18.

hath not less goodness because he hath more glory ; his bowels still yearn on us. I will therefore rather present my prayers to him who always did heal, than to those who sometimes did hurt. And though this be no convincing argument to Papists, it is a comfortable motive to Protestants. A good third, where so good firsts and seconds have been laid before.





Occasional Meditations.



I.

LOVE AND ANGER.

I saw two children fighting together in the street. The father of the one passing by, fetched his son away and corrected him; the other lad was left without any check, though both were equally faulty in the fray. I was half offended that, being guilty alike, they were not punished alike: but the parent would only meddle with him over whom he had an undoubted dominion, to whom he bare an unfeigned affection.

The wicked sin, the godly smart most in

this world. God singleth out his own sons, and beateth them by themselves: whom he loveth he chasteneth.* Whilst the ungodly, preserved from affliction, are reserved for destruction. It being needless that their hair should be shaved with a hired razor † whose heads are intended for the axe of divine justice. ‡

II. ✓

UPWARDS, UPWARDS.

How large houses do they build in London on little ground! Revenging themselves on the narrowness of their room with store of stories. Excellent arithmetic! from the root of one floor to multiply so many chambers. And though painful the climbing up, pleasant the staying there, the higher the healthfuller, with clearer light and sweeter air.

Small are my means on earth. May I mount my soul the higher in heavenly

* Heb. xii. 6.

† Is. vii. 20.

‡ Matt. iii. 10.

meditations, relying on Divine Providence; he that fed many thousands with five loaves,* may feed me and mine with the FIFTH PART of that one loaf, that once all mine. Higher my soul! higher! In bodily buildings, commonly the garrets are most empty, but my mind, the higher mounted, will be the better furnished. Let perseverance to death be my uppermost chamber, the roof of which grace is the pavement of glory.

III.

BEWARE WANTON WIT.

I saw an indenture too fairly engrossed; for the writer (better scrivener than clerk) had so filled it with flourishes that it hindered my reading thereof; the wantonness of his pen made a new alphabet, and I was subject to mistake his dashes for real letters.

What damage hath unwary rhetoric done to religion! Many an innocent reader

* Matt. xiv. 17.

hath taken Damascene and Theophylact at their word, counting their eloquent hyperboles of Christ's presence in the sacrament, the exact standards of their judgment, whence after ages brought in transubstantiation. Yea, from the Fathers' elegant apostrophes to the dead, (lively pictures by hasty eyes may be taken for living persons,) prayers to saints took their original. I see that truth's secretary must use a set hand in writing important points of divinity. Ill dancing for nimble wits on the precipices of dangerous doctrines. For though they escape by their agility, others (encouraged by their examples) may be brought to destruction.

IV.

ILL DONE, UNDONE.

I saw one, whether out of haste or want of skill, put up his sword the wrong way ; it cut even when it was sheathed, the edge being transposed where the back should

have been ; so that, perceiving his error, he was fain to draw it out, that he might put it up again.

Wearied and wasted with civil war, we that formerly loathed the manna of peace, because common, could now be content to feed on it, though full of worms and putrified : some so desirous thereof, that they care not on what terms the war be ended, so it be ended ; but such a peace would be but a truce, and the conditions thereof would no longer be in force than whilst *they* are in force. Let us pray that the sword be sheathed the right way, with God's glory ; and without the dangerous dislocation of prince and people's right : otherwise it may justly be suspected that the sword put up will be drawn out again, and the articles of an ill agreement, though engrossed in parchment, not take effect so long as paper would continue.

V.

A PACE, A PACE

Rowing on the Thames, the waterman confirmed me in what formerly I had learnt from the maps; how that river, westward, runs so crooked, as likely to lose itself in a labyrinth of its own making. From Reading to London by land, thirty; by water a hundred miles. So wantonly that stream disporteth itself, as if as yet unresolved whether to advance to the sea or retreat to its fountain.

But the same being past London (as if sensible of its former laziness, and fearing to be checked of the ocean, the mother of all rivers, for so long loitering; or else, as if weary with wandering, and loath to lose more way; or, lastly, as if conceiving such wildness inconsistent with the gravity of his channel, now grown old, and ready to be buried in the sea,) runs in so direct a line, that from London to Gravesend the

number of the miles are equally twenty both by land and by water.

Alas! how much of my life is lavished away! Oh, the intricacies, windings, wanderings, turnings, tergiversations of my deceitful youth! I have lived in the midst of a crooked generation,* and with them have turned aside unto crooked ways.† High time it is now for me to make straight paths for my feet,‡ and to redeem what is past by amending what is present and to come. Flux, flux (in the German tongue quick, quick) was a motto of Bishop Jewel's§, presaging the approach of his death. May I make good use thereof; make haste, make haste, God knows how little time is left me; and may I be a good husband to improve the short remnant thereof.

* Phil. ii. 15.

† Heb. xii. 13.

‡ Psalm cxxv. 5.

§ In his life, p. 10.

VI.

ALWAYS THE RISING SUN.

I have wondered why the Romish Church do not pray to St Abraham, St David, St Hezekiah, &c., as well as to the apostles and their successors since Christ's time; for those ancient patriarchs, by the confession of Papists, were long since relieved out of limbo, (soon out, who were never in,) and admitted to the sight and presence of God. Especially Abraham, being father of the faithful, as well Gentile as Jew, would (according to their principles) be a proper patron for their petitions.

But it seems that modern saints rob the old ones of their honour; a Garnet, or late Bernard of Paris, have severally more prayers made unto them than many old saints have together. New besoms sweep clean; new cisterns of fond men's own hewing most likely to hold water.*

* Jer. ii. 13.

Protestants, in some kind, serve their living ministers as Papists their dead saints. For aged pastors, who have borne the heat of the day in our Church, are jostled out of respect by young preachers, not having half their age, nor a quarter of their learning and religion. Yet let not the former be disheartened, for thus it ever was and will be—English Athenians, all for novelties, new sects, new schisms, new doctrines, new disciplines, new prayers, new preachers.

VII.

CHARITY, CHARITY.

Church story reports of St John, that being grown very aged, (well-nigh a hundred years old,) wanting strength and voice to make a long sermon, was wont to go up into the pulpit, and often repeat these words—Babes, keep yourselves from idols ; brethren, love one another.

Our age may seem sufficiently to have provided against the growth of idolatry in

England. Oh that some order were taken for the increase of charity ! It were liberty enough if for the next seven years all sermons were bound to keep residence on this text—Brethren, love one another.

But would not some fall out with themselves if appointed to preach unity to others? Vindictive spirits, if confined to this text, would confine the text to their passion; by brethren understanding only such of their own party. But oh, seeing other monopolies are dissolved, let not this remain against the fundamental law of charity. Let all bend their heads, hearts, and hands, to make up the breaches in church and state. But too many now-a-days are like Pharaoh's magicians, who could conjure up with their charms more new frogs,* but could not remove or drive away those multitudes of frogs which were there before. Unhappily happy in making more rents and dissensions, but unable or unwilling to compose our former differences.

* Exod. viii. 7.

VIII.

THE SENSIBLE PLANT.

I heard much of a sensible plant, and counted it a senseless relation, (a rational beast, carrying as little contradiction,) until, beholding it, mine eyes ushered my judgment into a belief thereof. My comprehension thereof is this: God, having made three great stairs, (vegetable, sensible, and reasonable creatures,) that men thereby might climb up into the knowledge of a Deity, hath placed some things of a middle nature as half-paces betwixt the stairs, so to make the step less, and the ascent more easy for our meditations.

Thus this active plant, with visible motion, doth border and confine on sensible creatures. Thus in Africa, some most agile and intelligent marmosites may seem to shake (fore-feet shall I say, or) hands with the rudest savages of that country, as not much more than one re-

move from them in knowledge and civility.

But by the same proportion may not man, by custom and improvement of piety, mount himself near to an angelical nature? Such was Enoch, who, whilst living on earth, walked with God.* Oh, may our conversation be in heaven! † For shall a plant take a new degree, and proceed sensible; and shall man have his grace stayed for want of sufficiency, and not whilst living here commence angel, in his holy and heavenly affections?

IX.

CHRIST MY KING.

I read how King Edward the First ingeniously surprised the Welsh into subjection, proffering them such a prince as should be—

1. The son of a king.
2. Born in their own country.

* Gen. v. 22.

† Phil. iii. 20.

3. Whom none could tax for any fault.

The Welsh accepted the conditions, and the king tendered them his son Edward, an infant, newly born in the castle of Carnarvon.

Do not all these qualifications mystically centre themselves in my Saviour?

1. The King of heaven saith unto him, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*

2. Our true countryman, real flesh: Whereas he took not on him the nature of angels.

3. Without spot or blemish; like to us in all things, sin only excepted.

Away, then, with those wicked men who will not have this King to rule over them.† May he have dominion in and over me! Thy kingdom come. Heaven and earth cannot afford a more proper Prince for the purpose, exactly accomplished with all these comfortable qualifications.

* Psalm ii. 7.

† Luke xix. 14.

X.

TRIBULATION.

I find two sad etymologies of tribulation. One from *tribulus*, a three-forked thorn ; which intimates that such afflictions, which are as full of pain and anguish unto the soul as a thorn thrust into a tender part of the flesh is unto the body, may properly be termed tribulations.

The other from *tribulus*, the head of a flail, or flagel, knaggy and knotty (made commonly, as I take it, of a thick black-thorn) and then it imports that afflictions, falling upon us as heavy as the flail threshing the corn, are styled tribulations.

I am in a strait which deduction to embrace—from the sharp or from the heavy thorn. But which is the worst? Though I may choose whence to derive the word, I cannot choose so as to decline the thing. I must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

* Acts xiv. 22.

Therefore I will labour not to be like a young colt, first set to plough, which more tires himself out with his own untowardness (whipping himself with his mispent mettle) than with the weight of what he draws; and will labour patiently to bear what is imposed upon me.

XI.

BEWARE.

I saw a cannon shot off. The men at whom it was levelled fell flat on the ground, and so escaped the bullet. Against such blows, falling is all the fencing, and prostration all the armour of proof.

But that which gave them notice to fall down, was their perceiving of the fire before the ordnance was discharged. Oh the mercy of that fire! which, as it were, repenting of the mischief it had done, and the murder it might make, ran a race, and outstript the bullet, that men (at the sight thereof) might be provided, when they could not

resist, to prevent it. Thus every murdering piece is also a warning piece against itself.

God, in like manner, warns before he wounds; frights before he fights. Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed. Oh, let us fall down before the Lord our Maker; then shall his anger be pleased to make in us a daily passover, and his bullets, levelled at us, shall fly above us.

XII.

THE FIRST-FRUITS.

Papists observe (such are curious priers into Protestants' carriage) that charity in England lay in a swoon from the dissolution of abbeys, in the reign of King Henry the Eighth, till about the tenth of Queen Elizabeth.

As if in that age of ruin, none durst raise religious buildings, and as if the axe and hammer, so long taught to beat down,

had forgot their former use to build up for pious intents.

At last comes William Lambert,* Esquire, and first founds an hospital at Greenwich in Kent, calling that his society (like politic Joab, after David's name,†) the poor people of Queen Elizabeth. And after this worthy man followed many, that we may almost dazzle Papists' eyes with the light of Protestant good works. The same Papists, perchance, may now conceive charity so disheartened in our days by these civil wars and the consequences thereof, that no Protestants hereafter should be so desperate as to adventure upon a public good deed. Oh, for a Lambert junior, (and I hope some of his lineage are left heirs to his lands and virtues,) who shall break through the ranks of all discouragements; so that now English Protestants, being to begin a new score of good works, might from him date their

* See Camden's Brit. in Kent, p. 327.

† 2 Sam. xii. 28.

epoch. Such a charity deserves to be knighted for the valour thereof.

XIII.

THE RECRUIT.

I read how one main argument which the apostle Paul enforceth on Timothy, to make full proof of his ministry, is this: For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* Thus the dying saints, drawing near to heaven, their mark, is the best spur for the surviving to make the more speed in their race.

How many excellent divines have these sad times hastened to their long home † (so called in Scripture, not because long going thither, but long [ever] tarrying there!) How many have been sorrow-shot to their heart! Oh that this would edge the endeavours of our generation, to succeed in the dead places of worthy men! Shall the Papists curiously observe and

* 2 Tim. iv. 6.

† Eccles. xii. 5.

sufficiently boast, that their Stapleton* was born on the same day on which Sir Thomas More was beheaded, (as if his cradle was made of the other's coffin,) and shall not our nurseries of learning supply the void rooms of our worthies deceased? No sin, I hope, to pray that our Timothies come not short of our Pauls; as in time, so in learning and religion.

XIV.

THE MONGREL.

I find the natural philosopher, making a character of the lion's disposition, amongst other his qualities reporteth, that first the lion feedeth on men, and afterwards, if forced with extremity of hunger, on women.†

Satan is a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Only he inverts the method, and in his bill of fare takes the

* Pitzeus, in Vita Stapletoni.

† In viros priusquam in terminas sævit. Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. viii. cap. 10.

second course first. Ever since he overtempted our grandmother Eve, encouraged with success, he hath preyed first on the weaker sex. It seems he hath all the vices, not the virtues, of that king of beasts; a wolf-lion, having his cruelty without his generosity.

XV.

EDIFICATION.

I read in a learned physician how our provident mother, Nature, foreseeing men (her wanton children) would be tampering with the edgetools of minerals, hid them far from them, in the bowels of the earth; whereas she exposed plants and herbs more obvious to the eye, as fitter for their use. But some bold empirics, neglecting the latter as too common, have adventured on those hidden minerals, oftentimes (through want of skill) to the hurt of many, and hazard of more.

God, in the New Testament, hath

placed all historical and practical matter (needful for Christians to know and believe) in the beginning of the gospel. All such truths lie above ground, plainly visible in the literal sense. The prophetic and difficult part comes in the close. But though the Testament was written in Greek, too many read it like Hebrew, beginning at the end thereof. How many trouble themselves about the Revelation, who might be better busied in plain divinity! Safer prescribing to others, and practising in themselves, positive piety; leaving such mystical minerals to men of more judgment to prepare them.

XVI.

MAD, NOT MAD.

I find St Paul in the same chapter confess and deny madness in himself: Acts, xxvi. 11. And being exceeding mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities, ver. 25. When Festus

challenged him to be beside himself, I am not mad, most noble Festus. Whilst he was mad indeed, then none did suspect or accuse him to be distracted; but when converted, and in his right mind, then Festus taxeth him of madness.

There is a country in Africa,* wherein all the natives have pendulous lips, hanging down like dogs' ears, always raw and sore. Here only such as are handsome are pointed at for monsters in this age, wherein polluted and unclean lips are grown epidemical; if any refrain their tongues from common sins, alone are gazed at as strange spectacles.

XVII.

THE DEEPEST CUT.

I beheld a lapidary cutting a diamond with a diamond hammer and anvil, both of the same kind.

God in Scripture styled his servants his

* Munst. Cosmog.
Q

jewels.* His diamonds they are; but alas! rude, rough, unpolished, without shape or fashion, as they arise naked out of the bed of the earth, before art hath dressed them. See how God, by rubbing one rough diamond against another, maketh both smooth. Barnabas, afflicts Paul,† and Paul afflicts Barnabas, by their hot falling out; Jerome occasioneth trouble to Rufinus, and Rufinus to Jerome.

In our unnatural war none I hope so weak and wilful as to deny many good men (though misled) engaged on both sides. Oh how have they scratched, and rased, and pierced, and bruised, and broken one another! Behold Heaven's hand grating one diamond with another; as for all those who uncharitably deny any good on that party which they dislike, such shew themselves diamonds indeed in their hardness, (cruel censuring,) but none in any commendable quality in their conditions.

* Mal. iii. 17.

† Acts xv. 39.

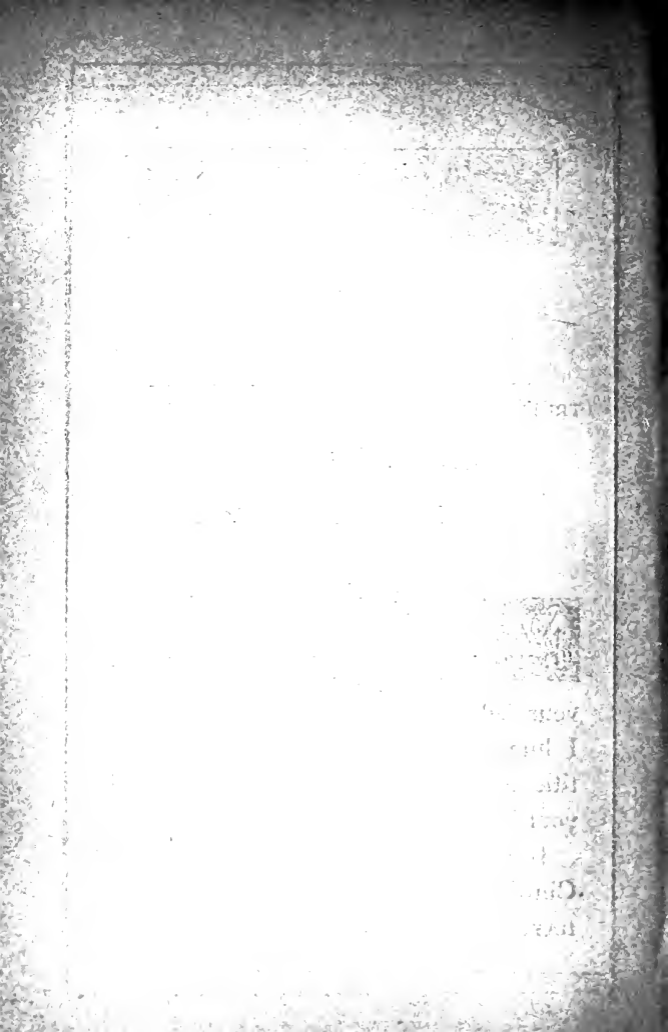
MIXT CONTEMPLATIONS

IN

BETTER TIMES.



“LET YOUR MODERATION BE KNOWN TO ALL MEN, THE LORD
IS AT HAND.”





TO THE

TRULY HONOURABLE & MOST VIRTUOUS LADY,

THE LADY MONCK.



MADAM,—I had the happiness, some sixteen years since, to be minister of that parish wherein your ladyship had your nativity, and this I humbly conceive doth afford me some title to dedicate my weak endeavours to your honour.

It is notoriously known in our English Chronicles, that there was an ILL MAY-DAY, anno Dom. 1517, in the ninth year

of King Henry the Eighth, wherein much mischief was done in London, the lives of many lost, and estates of more confounded.

This last GOOD MAY-DAY hath made plentiful amends for that evil one, and hath laid a foundation for the happiness of an almost ruined church and state; which as under God it was effected by the prudence and valour of your noble and most renowned husband, so you are eminently known to have had a finger, yea a hand, yea an arm happily instrumental therein. God reward you with honour here, and glory hereafter, which is the desire of millions in the three nations, and amongst them of

Your honour's

Most humble servant,

THOMAS FULLER.



TO
THE COURTEOUS READER.



JUSTLY presume thee too much Christian and gentleman to trample on him who prostrates himself. I confess myself subject to just censure, that I have not severally sorted these contemplations, setting such which are, 1. Of scripture; 2. Historical; 3. Occasional; 4. Personal; distinctly by themselves, which now are confusedly heaped, or rather huddled together.

This I confess was caused by my haste,

the press hourly craving with the daughter
of the horseleech, Give, give.

However, such a confused medley may
pass for the lively emblem of THESE TIMES,
the subject of this our book. And when
these times shall be reduced into better
order, my book, at the next impression,
may be digested into better method. Mean-
time I remain

Thy servant in Christ Jesus,

THOMAS FULLER.





Next Contemplations on these Times.



I.

PLAY AN AFTER-GAME.



WE read how at the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, Neh. iii. 12, Next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Haloheh, he and his daughters. Was it woman's work to handle a trowel? Did it consist with the modesty of that sex to clamber scaffolds?

Surely those females did only repair by the proxy of their purses, in which sense Solomon is said to have built the temple.

Our weaker sex hath been overstrong in making and widening the breaches in our English Zion, both by their purses and persuasions. To redeem their credit, let them hereafter be as active in building as heretofore they were in breaking down.

Such wives, who not only lie in the bosoms, but lodge in the affections of loving husbands, who are empowered with places of command, joining IMPORTUNITY to their OPPORTUNITY, may be marvelously instrumental to the happiness of our nation.

We read of Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 25, that none was like him, who sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. By the same proportion that person will prove peerless in piety who hath a godly consort in his bosom, seasonably to incite him, who is so forward in himself to all honourable actions.

II.

MIRACULOUS CURE.

We read, Luke xiii. 11, of a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in nowise lift up herself. This woman may pass for the lively emblem of the English nation; from the year of our Lord 1642 (when our wars first began) unto this present 1660, are eighteen years in my arithmetic; all which time our land hath been bowed together, past possibility of standing upright.

Some will say that the weight of heavy taxes have caused this crookedness. But alas! this is the least and lightest of all things I reflect at in this allusion. It is chiefly the weight of our sins, Heb. xii. 1, which doth so easily beset us. Our mutual malice and animosities have caused this incurvation.

A pitiful posture wherein the face is

made to touch the feet, and the back is set above the head. God in due time set us right, and keep us right, that the head may be in its proper place; next the neck of the nobility, that the breast of the gentry, the loins of the merchants and citizens, the thighs of the yeomanry, the legs and feet of artificers and day-labourers. As for the clergy (here by me purposely omitted) what place soever shall be assigned them; if low, God grant patience; if high, give humility unto them.

When thus our land in God's leisure shall be restored to its former rectitude, and set upright again, then I hope she may leave off her STEEL BODIES, which have galled her with wearing them so long, and return again to her peaceable condition.

III.

HAND ON MOUTH.

It is said, Gen. vi. 11, how before the flood the earth was filled with violence.

Some will say, with Nicodemus, how can these things be; violence being relative, and requiring a counterpart. Though such tyrants were hammers, others must be patient anvils for them to smite upon. Such persons, purely passive in oppression, were to be pitied, not punished; to be delivered, not drowned in the flood.

But the answer is easy, seeing we read in the same chapter, ver. 5, that God saw that the imaginations of the thoughts of man was only evil continually. God plainly perceived that the sufferers of violence would have been offerers of it, if empowered with might equal to their malice. Their cursedness was as sharp, though their horns were not so long; and what they lacked in deed and actions, they made up in desires and endeavours. So that in ending a general deluge over all, God was clearly just, and men justly miserable.

Let such Englishmen who have been of the depressed party during our civil wars, enter into a scrutiny and serious

search of their own souls, whether or no (if armed with power) they would not have laid as great load on others as themselves underwent. Yea, let them out of a godly jealousy suspect more cruelty in themselves than they can conceive. Then will they find just cause to take the blame and shame on themselves, and give God the glory that he hath not drowned all in a general deluge of destruction.

IV.

AT LAST.

A lady of quality, formerly forward to promote our civil wars, and whose well-intending zeal had sent in all her plate to Guildhall, was earnestly discoursing with a divine concerning these times, a little before dinner; her face respecting the cupboard in the room, which was furnished with plenty of pure Venice glasses: "Now," said she, "I plainly perceive, that I and many of my judgment have

been abused with the specious pretences of liberty and religion, till in the indiscreet pursuance thereof we are almost fallen into slavery and atheism.”

To whom the other, betwixt jest and earnest, replied : “ Madam, it is no wonder that now your eyes are opened ; for so long as this cupboard was full of thick and massy plate, you could perceive nothing through them ; but now so many clear and transparent glasses are substituted in their room, all things are become obvious to your intuition.”

The possessing of superfluous wealth sometimes doth hinder our clear apprehensions of matters ; like a pearl in the eye of the soul, prejudicing the sight thereof ; whilst poverty may prove a good collyrium, or eyesalve unto us, to make a true discovery of those things we knew not before.

V.

MISTAKEN.

I beheld honour as of a mounting and aspiring nature, and therefore I expected, rationally enough as I conceive, to have found it ascending to the clouds.

I looked upon wealth as what was massy, ponderous, and by consequence probable to settle and be firmly fixed on the earth.

But oh! how much is my expectation frustrated and defeated! For David, Psalm vii. 5, maketh mention of honour lying in the dust: and Solomon his son, Prov. xxiii. 5, informeth me, how riches certainly make themselves wings, and flee away as an eagle toward heaven: what I looked for below is towered aloft, and what I expected above is fallen below.

Our age hath afforded plentiful experiments of both: honour was near the dust, when a new nobility of a later stamp were

in a fair likelihood to have outshined those of a purer standard. The wealth of the land doth begin (to use the falconer's phrase) to fly to lessen. And if these taxes continue, will soon fly out of sight. So uncertain and unsafe it is for men to bottom their happiness on any earthly perfection.

VI.

TRUTH.

I saw a traveller in a terrible tempest take his seasonable shelter under a fair and thick tree; it afforded him protection for a good time, and secured him from the rain.

But after that it held up, and was fair round about, he unhappily continued under the tree so long till the droppings thereof made him soundly wet, and he found more to condemn his weakness than pity his wetting.

A parliament is known to be the best refuge and sanctuary to shelter us from

the tempest of violence and oppression. It is sometimes the sole, and always the surest remedy in that kind. But, alas! the late parliament lasted so long, that it began to be the grievance of the nation, after that the most and best members thereof were violently excluded.

The remedy turned the malady of the land, and we were in fear to be drowned by the droppings of that tree, if God of his gracious goodness had not put an unexpected period to their power.

VII.

AFTER-BORN.

A lady, big with child, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and in the dungeon was delivered of a son, who continued with her till a boy of some bigness. It happened that one time he heard his mother (for see neither of them could, as to discern in so dark a place) bemoan her condition.

Why, mother, (said the child,) do you complain, seeing you want nothing you can wish, having clothes, meat, and drink sufficient? Alas! child, (returned the mother,) I lack liberty, converse with Christians, the light of the sun, and many things more, which thou, being prison-born, neither art nor can be sensible of in thy condition.

The *post-nati*, understanding thereby such striplings born in England since the death of monarchy therein, conceive this land, their mother to be in a good estate. For one fruitful harvest followeth another, commodities are sold at reasonable rates, abundance of brave clothes are worn in the city, though not by such persons whose birth doth best become, but whose purses can best bestow them.

But their mother, England, doth justly bemoan the sad difference betwixt her present and former condition, when she enjoyed full and free trade without payment of taxes, save so small they seemed

rather an acknowledgment of their allegiance than a burden to their estate; when she had the court of a king, the House of Lords, yea, and the Lord's house, decently kept, constantly frequented, without falsehood in doctrine, or faction in discipline. God of his goodness restore unto us so much of these things as may consist with his glory and our good!

VIII.

A HEAP OF PEARLS.

I saw a servant-maid, at the command of her mistress, make, kindle, and blow a fire. Which done, she was posted away about other business, whilst her mistress enjoyed the benefit of the fire. Yet I observed that this servant, whilst industriously employed in the kindling thereof, got a more general, kindly, and continuing heat, than her mistress herself. Her heat was only by her, and not in her, staying with her no longer than she stayed by the chimney;

whilst the warmth of the maid was in-laid, and equally diffused through the whole body.

An estate suddenly gotten is not so lasting to the owner thereof, as what is duly got by industry. The substance of the diligent, saith Solomon, Prov. xii. 27, is precious. He cannot be counted poor that hath so many pearls, precious brown bread, precious small beer, precious plain clothes, &c. A comfortable consideration in this our age, wherein many hands have learned their lesson of labour, who were neither born nor bred unto it.

IX.

SILENT SADNESS.

Two captains on the same side in our civil wars, discoursing together, one of them (with small cause and without any measure) did intolerably boast of his personal performances, as if he had been of the quorum in all considerable actions.

At last, not ashamed of, but weaned with his own loquacity, he desired the other captain to relate what service he had done in these wars; to whom he returned, "Other men can tell you of that."

We meet with many, living at the sign of the Royalist, who much brag of their passive services (I mean their sufferings) in the late war. But that spoke in the wheel which creaketh most doth not bear the greatest burden in the cart. The loudest criers are not always the largest losers.

How much hath Sir John Stowel lost? How many new gentlemen have started up out of the estate of that ancient knight? What hath the Lord Craven lost? Whether more, or more unjustly, hard to decide? Others can tell of their and many other men's sufferings, whilst they themselves hold their peace.

Here we dare not speak of him, who, though the greatest loser of all, speaketh nothing of himself; and therefore his silence putteth a greater obligation on us,

both to pity him here on earth, and pray for him to Heaven.

X.

LOST AND KEPT.

This seeming paradox will on examination prove a real truth, viz., that though Job lost his seven thousand sheep, consumed by fire of God, Job i. 16, (understand it, by his permission, and Satan's immission,) yet he still kept the wool of many of them.

For Job, in the vindication of his integrity, (not to praise but purge himself,) doth relate how the loins of the poor blessed him, being warmed with the fleece of his sheep, Job xxxi. 20. So much of his wool (in the cloth made thereof) he secured in a safe hand, lending it to God (in poor people) [Prov. xix. 17] as the best of debtors, being most able and willing to repay it.

Such as have been plundered of their

estates in these wars may content and comfort themselves with this consideration, that so long as they enjoyed plenty they freely parted with a proportion thereof to the relief of the poor; what they gave, that they have; it still remaineth theirs, and is safely laid up for them in a place where rust and moth do not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

XI.

ALL.

The Magdeburgenses, out of a spirit of opposition to the Papists, overprising the person and actions of St Peter, do, in my mind, on the other side too much decry him, causelessly caviling at his words to our Saviour, Mark x. 28: *Ecce, reliquimus omnia*—Behold, we have left all and followed thee.

What, say they, had he left? He maketh as if he had left great matters, and a mighty estate; whereas this his ALL

was not more than an old ship, some few rotten nets, and such-like inconsiderable accommodations.

But Bellarmine (always ingenious, sometimes satirical) payeth them home for their causeless exception against that apostle. What! saith he, would they have him have left more than he had? ALL was ALL, how little soever it was.

Different, I confess, is the standard and measure of men's losses in this time. Some, in preserving of their consciences, have lost manners, others farms, others cottages. Some have had a *hin*, others a *homer*, others an *ephah* of afflictions. However, those men must on all hands be allowed the greatest losers who have lost ALL, (how small soever that their ALL was,) and who, with the widow, Mark xii. 44, have parted with ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῶν, all their livelihood.

XII.

GOOD ACCOUNTANT.

I was present in the west country some twenty-five years since, when a bishop made a partage of money collected by a brief, amongst such who, in a village, had been sufferers by a casual fire; one of whom brought in the inventory of his losses far above all belief.

Being demanded how he could make out his losses to so improbable a proportion, he alleged the burning of a pear-tree growing hard by his house, valuing the same at twenty years' purchase, and the pears at twenty shillings per annum, presuming every one would be a bearing year; and by such windy particulars did blow up his losses to the sum by him nominated.

Some pretend in these wars to have lost more thousands than ever they were possessed of hundreds. These reckon in not only what they had, but what they might,

yea, would have had. They compute not only their possessions, but reversions, yea, their probabilities, possibilities, and impossibilities also, which they might desire, but could never hope to obtain.

The worst is I might term many of these men ANTI-MEPHIBOSHETHS, who, out of his loyalty to David, 2 Sam. xix. 30, said, Let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come home again in peace unto his own house. But these, except they may have all, and more than all they ever possessed, care not a whit whether or no the king ever return; so unconcerned are they in his condition.

XIII.

NO TITTLE OF TITLE.

Two young gentlemen were comparing their revenues together, vying which of them were the best. My demesnes, saith the one, is worth two; but mine, saith the other, is worth four hundred pounds a year.

My farms, saith the one, are worth four ; but mine, saith the other, are worth eight hundred pounds a year.

My estate, saith the one, is my own ; to which the other returned no answer, as conscious to himself that he kept what lawfully belonged to another.

I care not how small my means be, so they be my means ; I mean my own, without any injury to others. What is truly gotten may be comfortably kept. What is otherwise may be possessed, but not enjoyed.

Upon the question, What is the worst bread which is eaten ? One answered, In respect of the coarseness thereof, bread made of beans. Another said, Bread made of acorns. But the third hit the truth, who said, Bread taken out of other men's mouths, who are the true proprietaries thereof. Such bread may be sweet in the mouth to taste, but is not wholesome in the stomach to digest.

XIV.

FREELY, FREELY.

A grave divine in the west country, (familiarily known unto me,) conceiving himself over-taxed, repaired to one of the governors of the king's garrisons to move for some mitigation.

The governor perceiving the satin cap of this divine to be torn, Fie, fie, said he, that a man of your quality should wear such a cap; the RATS have gnawed it. Oh no, sir, answered he, the RATES have gnawed it.

The print or impression of the teeth of taxes is visible in the clothes of many men, yea, it hath corroded holes in many men's estates. Yea, as Hatto, Archbishop of Mentz, is reported to have been eaten up by rats,* so the vermin of taxes, if continuing, is likely to devour our nation.

However, let us not in the least degree now grudge the payment thereof. Let us

* Munster's Cosmog., in German.

now pay taxes that we may never pay taxes; for, as matters now stand, our freeness at the present may cause our freedom at the future, if once the arrears of the army and navy were discharged.

I care not how much I am let blood, so it be not by the adventure of an empiric, but advice of a physician, who I am sure will take no more ounces from me than may consist with my safety, and need doth require. Such the piety and policy of the present parliament, they will impose no more payments than the necessity of the estate doth extort. The rather because they are persons (blessed be God!) of the primest quality in the nation, and let us blood through their own veins, the greatest part of the payments they impose lighting first on their own estates.

XV.

CRY WITHOUT CAUSE, AND BE WHIPT.

I have known the city of London al-

most forty years—their shops did ever sing the same tune, that **TRADING WAS DEAD**. Even in the reign of King James (when they wanted nothing but thankfulness) this was their complaint.

It is just with God, that they who complained without cause should have just cause to complain. Trading, which then was quick, and in health, hath since been sick, yea, in a swoon, yea, dead, yea, buried. There is a vacation in the shops in the midst of high term; and if shops be in a consumption, ships will not be long in good health.

Yet I know not whether to call this decay of trade in London a mishap or a happy miss. Probably the city, if not pinched with poverty, had never regained her wealth.

XVI.

SPRING BEGAN.

I meet with two etymologies of **BON**

FIRES. Some deduce it from fires made of bones, relating it to the burning of martyrs, first fashionable in England in the reign of King Henry the Fourth. But others derive the word (more truly, in my mind) from **BOON**, that is, good, and fires; whether good be taken here for great, or for merry and cheerful, such fires being always made on welcome occasions.

Such an occasion happened at London last February, 1659. I confess the 11th of March is generally beheld as the first day of the spring, but hereafter London (and in it all England) may date its vernal heat (after a long winter of woes and war) from the 11th of February.

On which day so many boon-fires (the best **NEW-LIGHTS** I ever saw in that city) were made; although I believe the fagots themselves knew as much as some who laid them on for what purpose those fires were made.

The best is, such fires were rather prophetic than historical, not so much tell-

ing as foretelling the condition of that city and our nation, which, by God's gracious goodness, is daily bettered and improved.

But, oh, the excellent boon-fire which the converted Ephesians made, Acts xix. 19: Many also of them which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

What was a pint of ashes worth, according to that proportion? But oh! in the imitation of the Ephesians, let us Englishmen labour to find out our bosom sin, and burn it (how dear soever unto us) in the flames of holy anger and indignation. Such boon-fires would be most profitable to us and acceptable to God, inviting him to perfect and complete the good which he had begun to our nation.

XVII.

THE HAND IS ALL.

A gentlewoman, some sixty years since, came to Winchester School, where she had a son, and where Dr Love (one eminent in his profession) was then schoolmaster. This tender mother, seeing the terrible rods, (the properties of that school,) began with tears to bemoan the condition of her son, subject to so cruel correction. To whom the schoolmaster replied: Mistress, content yourself; it matters not how big the rod be, so it be in the hand of Love to manage it.

Alas! he was only Love in his surname; but what saith the apostle, 1 John iv. 16? God is love, even in his own essence and nature.

What, then, though the wicked be not only a rod in the hand of God, but, what is worse, a sword, (Psalm xvii. 13: The wicked, which is thy sword;) they shall do no hurt as long as God hath the ordering of them.

A pregnant experiment hereof we have in (the, call it, *rod* or *sword* of) our late civil war which lasted so long in our land, yet left so little signs behind it. Such who consider how much was destroyed in the war, may justly wonder that any provision was left, whilst such who behold the plenty we have left, will more admire that any was ever destroyed.

XVIII.

ALL TONGUE AND EARS.

We read, Acts xvii. 21, that all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

How cometh this transposition? Tell and hear; it should be hear and tell; they must hear it before they could tell it; and in the very method of nature, those that are deaf are dumb.

But know, it is more than probable that many Athenians told what they never

heard, being themselves the first finders, founders, and forgers of false reports, therewith merely to entertain the itching curiosity of others.

England aboundeth with many such Athenians; it is hard to say whether more false coin or false news be minted in our days. One side is not more pleased with their own factions than the other is with their own fictions.

Some pretend to intelligence without understanding, whose relations are their own confutations. I know some who repair to such novelants on purpose to know what news is false by their reporting thereof.

XIX.

GIVE AND TAKE.

The Archbishop of Spalatro, when Dean of Windsor, very affectionately moved the prebendaries thereof to contribute bountifully towards the relieving of a distressed foreigner, reporting him a person of much

worth and want; to whom one of the company replied—*Qui suadet, sua det*: Let him who persuadeth others give something of his own. But the archbishop, who was as covetous as ambitious, and whose charity had a tongue without hands, would not part with a penny.

The Episcopal party doth desire and expect that the Presbyterian should remit of his rigidness in order to an expedient betwixt them. The Presbyterians require that the Episcopal side abate of their austerity to advance an accommodation.

But some on both sides are so wedded to their wilfulness, stand so stiff in their judgments, are so high and hot in their passions, they will not part with the least punctilio in their opinions and practices.

Such men's judgments cannot pretend to the exactness of the Gibeonites, Judges xx. 16, that they hit the mark of the truth at an hair's breadth, and fail not, yet will they not abate an hair's breadth in order to unity; they will take all, but tender

nothing; make motions with their mouths, but none with their feet; for peace, not stirring a step towards it.

Oh that we could see some proffers and performances of condescension on either side, and then let others who remain obstinate, and will embrace no peace, be branded with PHAREZ, Gen. xxxviii. 29: The breach be upon them.

XX.

CHARITY, CHARITY.

In my father's time there was a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, a native of Carlton in Leicestershire,* where the people (through some occult cause) are troubled with a wharling in their throats, so that they cannot plainly pronounce the letter *r*. This scholar, being conscious of his infirmity, made a Latin oration of the usual expected length, without an *r* therein; and yet did he not only select

* Camd. Brit., in Leicestershire.

words fit for his mouth, easy for pronunciation, but also as pure and expressive for signification, to shew that men might speak without being beholden to the dog's letter.

Our English pulpits, for these last eighteen years, have had in them too much caninal anger, vented by snapping and snarling spirits on both sides. But if you bite and devour one another, (saith the apostle, Gal. v. 15,) take heed ye be not devoured one of another.

Think not that our sermons must be silent if not satirical, as if divinity did not afford smooth subjects enough to be seasonably insisted on in this juncture of time; let us try our skill whether we cannot preach without any dog-letter or biting word: the art is half learned by intending, and wholly by serious endeavouring it.

I am sure that such soft sermons will be more easy for the tongue of the preacher in pronouncing them, less grating to the

ears of pious people that hear them, and most edifying to the heart of both speaker and hearers of them.

XXI.

BUT ONE FAVOURITE.

We read how Abraham, Gen. xxv. 5, gave all he had unto Isaac. As for his six sons, Zimram, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishback, and Shuah, which he had by Keturah his concubine, he only gave them gifts, and sent them away into the east country.

England hath but one Isaac, or legitimate religion of the Church, namely, the Protestant, as the doctrine thereof is established in the Thirty-nine Articles. But how many spurious ones she hath (whether six, sixty, or six score) I neither do know nor will inquire, nor will I load my book and trouble the reader with their new, numerous, and hard names.

Oh may the State be pleased so far to

reflect on this Isaac, as to settle the solid inheritance upon him! Let the Protestant religion only be countenanced by the law, be owned and acknowledged for the received religion of the nation.

As for other sects, (the sons of Keturah,) we grudge not that gifts be bestowed upon them. Let them have a toleration, (and that I assure you is a great gift indeed,) and be permitted peaceably and privately to enjoy their consciences both in opinions and practices. Such favour may safely (not to say ought justly to) be afforded unto them so long as they continue peaceably in our Israel, and disturb not the estate.

This gift granted unto them, they need not to be sent away into the east or any other country. If they dislike their condition, they will either leave the land, and go over seas of their own accord, or else, (which is rather to be desired and hoped for) they will blush themselves out of their former follies, and by degrees cordially

reconcile themselves to the Church of England.

XXII.

CALMLY, CALMLY.

We read, Gen. v. 8, that when God solemnly proceeded in the sentencing of our first parents, he was heard walking in the garden in the cool of the day; to teach men, when they go about matters of moment, (wherein not only the present age but posterity is also concerned,) to becalm their souls of all passion. But, alas! much reformation made (rather under than by) King Charles, was done in the heat of the day, in the dog-days of our civil discords, and midsummer noon of our military distractions. So that possibly, when that which was done in the heat of the day shall be reviewed, even by the self-same persons in the cool of the day, they will perceive something by them so reformed, now to need a new reformation.

But this motion (and all that follow) I humbly lay down at their feet who have power and place to reform, who may either trample upon it or take it up, as their wisdoms shall see just occasion.

XXIII.

TRY AND TRUST.

It was wisely requested by the children of the captivity, Dan. i., and warily granted by the king's chamberlain unto them, that, by way of trial, they should feed on pulse for ten days, and then an inspection to be made on their countenances, whether the lilies therein did look as white and roses as red as before, that so their bill of fare might be either changed or continued as they saw just occasion.

Let such new practices as are to be brought into our Church be for a time candidates and probationers on their good behaviour, to see how the temper of the

people will fit them, and they fadge with it, before they be publicly enjoined.

Let them be like St Paul's deacons, I Tim. iii. 10, first be proved, then be used if found blameless. I cannot therefore but commend the discretion of such statesmen, who, knowing the Directory to be but a stranger, and considering the great inclination the generality of our nation had to the Common Prayer, made their temporary act to stand in force but for three years.

XXIV.

ALIKE, BUT CONTRARY.

I observe in Scripture, that power to do some deeds is a sufficient authority to do them. Thus Samson's power to pluck down the two fundamental pillars of Dagon's temple was authority enough for him to do it.

Elijah's power to make fire to come at his call on the two captains was authority

enough to do it, because such deeds were above the strength, stature, and standard of human proportion.

However, hence it doth not follow that it is lawful for a private man with axes and hammers to beat down a Christian church, because Samson plucked down Dagon's temple; nor doth it follow that men may burn their brethren with fagot and fire, because Elijah called for fire from Heaven; these being acts not miraculous but mischievous, and no might from Heaven, but mere malice from hell, required for the achieving thereof.

Here it is hard to say which of these two things have done most mischief in England; public persons having private souls and narrow hearts, consulting their own ease and advantage, or private persons having vast designs to invade public employments! This is most sure, that betwixt them both they have almost undone the most flourishing Church and State in the Christian world.

XXV.

CHASMA, PHASMA.

How bluntly and abruptly doth the Seventy-third Psalm begin! Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

Truly is a term of continuation, not inception of a speech. The head or top of this psalm seems lost or cut off, and the neck only remaining in the room thereof.

But know that this psalm hath two moieties; one unwritten, made only in the tiring-house of David's heart; the other written visible on the theatre, beginning as is aforesaid.

Thomas Aquinas, sitting silent in a musing posture at the table of the King of France, at last brake forth into these words, *Conclusum est contra Manichæos*—It is concluded against the Manichæans; which speech, though nonsense to the persons in

the place, at the best independent, without any connexion to the discourse at table, had its necessary coherence in the mind of that great schoolman.

David, newly awaking in this psalm out of the sweet slumber of his meditation, openeth his eyes with the good handsel of these words : Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. A maxim of undoubted truth, and a firm anchor to those who have been tossed in the tempest of these times.

XXVI.

SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE.

Cheshire hath formerly been called chief of men. Indeed, no county in England of the same greatness, or (if you will rather) of the same littleness, can produce so many families of ancient gentry.

Now let it break the stomachs, but not the hearts—abate the pride, not destroy the courage, of the inhabitants of this shire,

that they miscarried in their late undertakings, not so much by any defect in them as default in others.

If ten men together be to lift a log, all must jointly *συνάντιλαμβάνειν*, that is, heave up their parts (or rather their counter-parts) together.

But if nine of them fail, it is not only uncivil but unjust that one man should be expected to be a giant to do ten men's work.

Cheshire is Cheshire, (and so I hope will ever be,) but it is not all England; and valour itself may be pressed down to death under the weight of multitude.

The Lord Bacon would have rewards given to those men who, in the quest of natural experiments, make probable mistakes,* both because they are industrious therein, and because their aberrations may prove instructions to others after them; and to speak plainly, an ingenious miss is of more credit than a bungling casual hit.

* In his *Advancement of Learning*.

On the same account let Cheshire have a reward of honour, the whole kingdom faring the better for this county's faring the worse.

XXVII.

NATALE SOLUM DULCEDINE, ETC.

I must confess myself born in Northamptonshire, and if that worthy county esteem me no disgrace to it, I esteem it an honour to me. The English of the common people therein (lying in the very heart of the land) is generally very good.

And yet they have an odd phrase not so usual in other places.

They used to say, when at cudgel plays (such tame were far better than our wild battles) one gave his adversary such a sound blow as that he knew not whether to stand or to fall, that he SETTLED him at a blow.

The relics and stump (my pen dares

write no worse) of the Long Parliament pretended they would settle the Church and State; but surely, had they continued, it had been done in the dialect of Northamptonshire; they would so have settled us we should neither have known how to have stood, or on which side to have fallen.

XXVIII.

SEASONABLE PREVENTION.

When the famine in Egypt had lasted so long, the estates of the people were so exhausted by buying corn of the king, that, their money failing, they were forced to sell their cattle unto Joseph, (Gen. xlvii. 17;) and this maintained them with bread for one year more.

But the famine lasting longer, and their stock of cattle being wholly spent, they then sold all their lands, and after that their persons, to Joseph, as agent for Pharaoh, so that the king of Egypt be-

came proprietary of the bodies of all the people in his land, (Gen. xlvii. 23 :) Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day, and your land, for Pharaoh.

If our taxes had continued longer, they could not have continued longer. I mean, the nation was so impoverished, that the money (so much was hoarded up, or transported by military grandees) could not have been paid in specie.

Indeed, we began the war with brazen trumpets and silver money, and then came unto silver trumpets and brazen money, especially in our parliament half-crowns.

We must afterwards have sold our stocks of cattle, and then our lands, to have been able to perform payments. This done, it is too, too suspicious they would have seized on our persons too, and have envassalled us for ever unto them.

But, blessed be God, they are stricken upon the cheek-bone, (Psalm iii. 7,) where-

by their teeth are knocked out. Our fathers were not more indebted to God's goodness for delivering them from the Spanish Armada than we are from our own English army.

XXIX.

WOLF IN A LAMB'S SKIN.

But where is the Papist all this while? One may make hue and cry after him. He can as soon not be, as not be active. Alas! with the maid in the gospel, he is not dead, but sleepeth; or rather, he sleepeth not, but only shutteth his eyes in DOG-SLEEP, and doth awake when he seeth his advantage, and snappeth up many a LAMB out of our flocks.

Where is the Papist? do any say; yea, where is he not? They multiply as maggots in May, and act in and under the fanatics. What is faced with faction is lined with Popery; Faux's' dark lantern,

by a strange inversion, is under our new lights.

Quakers of themselves are a company of dull, blunt, silly souls. But they go down to the Romish Philistines, and from them they whet all the edge-tools of their arguments. A formal syllogism in the mouth of an Anabaptist is plain Jesuitical equivocation.

Meantime, we Protestant ministers fish all night and catch nothing; yea, lose many, who in these times fall from our Church as leaves in autumn. God, in His due time, send us a seasonable spring, that we may repair our losses again!

XXX.

VARIOUS FANCIES.

I know not what fifth monarchy men would have, and wish that they knew themselves.

I dare not flatly condemn them, lest I come within the apostle's reproof, (2 Peter

ii. 12 :) Speaking evil of things they understand not. If by Christ's reigning they only intend his powerful and effectual ruling by his grace in the hearts of his servants; we all will not turn, but continue fifth monarchy men, having always been of this judgment since we were of any judgment; had we as many arms as fingers, we would use them all herein to embrace their persons and opinions.

But some go farther, to expect an actual and personal reign of Christ on earth a thousand years, though not agreeing.

For herein, since some make him but about to set forth, others to be well onwards of his way, others to be alighting in the court, others to stand before the door, others that he is entering the palace, according to the slowness or swiftness of their several fancies herein.

However, if this be but a bare speculation, and advanceth not any farther, let them peaceably enjoy it. But if it hath a dangerous influence on men's practices to

unhinge their allegiance, and if the pretence to wait for Christ in his person be an intent to slight him in his proxy, (the magistrate,) we do condemn their opinion as false, and detest it as damnable, leaving their persons to be ordered by the wisdoms of those in authority.

XXXI.

MADE LOYAL.

When King Edward the First marched into Scotland, the men of the bishopric of Durham refused to follow his standard, pleading for themselves, that they were HOLY-WORK FOLK, only to wait on the shrine of St Cuthbert, and not to go out of their own country. But that wise and valiant prince cancelled their pretended privileges.

He levelled them with the rest of his subjects for CIVIL and MILITARY as well as HOLY-WORK FOLK, and made them to march with his army against his enemies.

If fifth monarchy (alias first anarchy) men challenge to themselves, that (by virtue of their opinion they hold) they must be exempted from their obedience to the government, because they, forsooth, (as the life-guard to his person,) must attend the coming of Christ to reign on earth; such is the wisdom of the State, it will make them know they must share in subjection with the rest of our nation.

But charity doth command me to believe that, in stating their opinions, fifth monarchy men's expressions are more offensive than their intentions, mouths worse than their minds, whose brains want strength to manage their own wild notions, and God grant their arms may never have power to produce them into action.

XXXII.

ATTEND, ATTEND.

Some of those whom they call **QUAKERS**,

are, to give them their due, very good moral men, and exactly just in their civil transactions. In proof whereof let me mention this passage, though chiefly I confess for the application thereof, which having done me (I praise God) some good, I am confident will do no hurt to any other.

A gentleman had two tenants, whereof one, being a QUAKER, repaired to his landlord on the quarter-day: Here, THOU, said he, tell out and take THY rent, without stirring his cap, or shewing the least sign of respect.

The other came cringeing and congeing: If it please your worship, said he, the times are very hard, and trading is dead, I have brought to your worship five pounds (the whole due being twenty) and shall procure the rest for your worship with all possible speed.

Both these tenants put together would make a perfect one, the rent-completing of the one, and tongue-compliments of

the other. But seeing they were divided, I am persuaded that of the two the landlord was less offended with the former, imputing his ill manners to his folly, but ascribing his good dealing to his honesty.

God expecteth and requireth both good works and good words. We cannot make our addresses and applications unto him in our prayers with too much awe and reverence.

However, such who court God with luscious language, give him all his attributes, and (as King James said of a divine who shall be nameless) compliment with God in the pulpit, will be no whit acceptable unto him, if they do not also endeavour to keep his commandments.

It is the due paying of God's **QUITRENTS**, which he expecteth; I mean the realising of our gratitude unto him for his many mercies, in leading the remainder of our lives according to his will and his word.

XXXIII.

NO REMEDY BUT PATIENCE.

Once a gaoler demanded of a prisoner newly committed unto him, whether or no he were a Roman Catholic? No, answered he. What then, said he, are you an Anabaptist? Neither, replied the prisoner. What, said the other, are you a Brownist, or a Quaker? Nor so, said the man, I am a Protestant, without wealth or guard, or any addition, equally opposite to all heretics and sectaries. Then, said the gaoler, get you unto the dungeon; I will afford no favour to you, who shall get no advantage by you. Had you been of any of the other religions, some hope I had to gain by the visits of such as are of your own persuasion, whereas now you will prove to me but an unprofitable prisoner.

This is the misery of moderation; I recall my word (seeing misery properly must have sin in it.) This is an affliction attend-

ing moderate men, that they have not an active party to side with them and favour them.

Men of great stature will quickly be made porters to a king, and those diminutively little, dwarfs to a queen, whilst such who are of a middle height may get themselves masters where they can. The moderate man, eminent for no excess or extravagancy in his judgment, will have few patrons to protect, or persons to adhere unto him. But what saith St Paul? (1 Cor. xv. 19 :) If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable.

XXXIV.

POTTAGE FOR MILK.

In these licentious times, wherein religion lay in a swoon, and many pretended ministers (minions of the times) committed or omitted in divine service what they pleased; some, not only in Wales, but in

England, and in London itself, on the Lord's day (sometimes with, sometimes without a psalm) presently popped up into the pulpit, before any portion of Scripture, either in the Old or New Testament, was read to the people.

Hereupon one in jest-earnest said, that formerly they put down BISHOPS and DEANS, and now they had put down CHAPTERS too. It is high time that this fault be reformed for the future, that God's Word, which is all gold, be not justled out to make room for men's sermons, which are but parcel-gilt at the best.

XXXV.

MODERATE MAY MEET.

When St Paul was at Athens, (Acts xvii. 18,) then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him, &c.

Some will say, Why was there no men-

tion here of the Peripatetics and Academics, both notable sects of philosophers, and then numerous in the city of Athens?

The answer is this: these being persons acted with more moderate principles, were contented to be silent, though not concurring in their judgments; whilst the Epicureans and Stoics were violent in the extremes, the first for the anarchy of Fortune, the other for the tyranny of Fate.

PEACE in our land, like St Paul, is now likely to be encountered with two opposite parties—such as are for the liberty of a commonwealth, and such as are for an absolute monarchy in the full height thereof; but I hope neither of both are so considerable in their number, parts, and influence on the people, but that the moderate party, advocates for peace, will prevail for the settling thereof.

XXXVI.

WHAT, NEVER WISE!

In the year of our Lord 1606, there happened a sad overflowing of the Severn-sea, on both sides thereof, which some still alive do (one I hope thankfully) remember.

An account hereof was written to John Stow, the industrious chronicler, from Dr Still, then bishop of Bath and Wells, and three other gentlemen of credit, to insert it in his story; one passage wherein I cannot omit.

Stow's Chronicle, p. 889:—"Among other things of note, it happened that, upon the tops of some hills, divers beasts of contrary nature had got up for their safety, as dogs, cats, foxes, hares, conies, moles, mice, and rats, who remained together very peaceably, without any manner or sign of fear of violence one towards another."

How much of man was there then in

brute creatures? How much of brutishness is there now in men? Is this a time for those who are sinking for the same cause, to quarrel and fall out? I dare add no more but the words of the apostle, Tim. ii. 7: Consider what I say; and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

XXXVII.

RECEDE A TITLE.

I saw two ride a race for a silver cup; he who won it outran the post many paces: indeed he could not stop his horse in his full career, and therefore was fain to run beyond the post, or else he had never come soon enough unto it.

But presently after, when he had won the wager, he reined his horse back again, and softly returned to the post, where, from the judges of the match, he received the cup, the reward of his victory.

Surely many moderate men designed a good mark to themselves, and propounded

pious ends and aims in their intentions. But query whether, in pursuance thereof, in our late civil destruction, they were not violented to outrun the mark, (so impossible it is to stop a soul in the full speed thereof,) and whether they did not in some things overdo and exceed what they intended.

If so, it is neither sin nor shame, but honourable and profitable, for such persons (sensible of their own over-activity) even fairly to go back to the post which they have outrun, and now calmly to demonstrate to the whole world that this only is the true and full measure of their judgments, whilst the rest was but the superfluity of their passions.

XXXVIII.

BEAT THYSELF.

I saw a mother threatening to beat her little child for not rightly pronouncing that petition in the Lord's prayer, And forgive
U

us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. The child essayed and offered as well as it could to utter it, adventuring at tepasses, trepasses, but could not pronounce the word aright. Alas! it is a SHIBBOLETH to a child's tongue, wherein there is a confluence of hard consonants together; and therefore if the mother had beaten defect in the infant for default, she deserved to have been beaten herself.

The rather because what the child could not pronounce the parents do not practise. Oh, how lispingly and imperfectly do we perform the close of this petition, As we forgive them that trespass against us! It is well if with the child we endeavour our best, though falling short in the exact observance thereof.

XXXIX.

WITHOUT BLOOD.

It passeth for a general report of what was customary in former times, that the

sheriff of the county used to present the judge with a pair of white gloves at those which we call maiden assizes—viz., when no malefactor is put to death therein; a great rarity (though usual in small) in large and populous counties.

England, a spacious country, is full of numerous factions in these distracted times. It is above belief, and will hardly find credit with posterity, that a general peace can be settled in our nation without effusion of blood.

But if we should be blessed with a dry peace, without one drop of blood therein, oh let the white gloves of honour and glory be in the first place presented to the God of heaven, the principal giver; and a second white pair of gratitude be given to our General, the instrumental procurer thereof.

XL.

AGAINST THE HEIR AND THE FLESH.

All devils are not equally easy to be ejected out of possessed people ; some are of a more sullen, sturdy, stubborn nature, good (or rather bad) at hold-fast, and hard to be cast out.

In like manner all bosom sins are not conquered with facility alike, and these three are of the greatest difficulty :—

1. Constitutionary sins, riveted in our tempers and complexions.

2. Customary sins, habited in us by practice and presumption.

3. Such sins to the repentance whereof restitution is required.

Oh! when a man hath not only devoured widows' houses, (Matt. xxiii. 14,) but also they have passed the first and second concoction in his stomach ; yea, when they are become blood in the veins, yea, sinews in the flesh of his estate, oh,

then to refund, to mangle and disinter one's demesnes, this goeth shroudly against flesh and blood indeed! But what saith the apostle?—Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Yet even this devil may be cast out with fasting and prayer, (Matt. xvii. 21.) This sin, notwithstanding it holdeth VIOLENT POSSESSION, may by those good means, and God's blessing thereon, have a firm ejection.

XLI.

A FREEWILL OFFERING.

When Job began to set up the second time, he built his recruited estate upon three bottoms:—

1. God's blessing.
2. His own industry.
3. His friends' charity.

Job xlii. 11: Every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one also an ear-ring of gold. Many drops meeting together filled the vessel.

When our patient Job, plundered of all he had, shall return again, certainly his loyal subjects will offer presents unto him (though they, alas! who love him best can give him least.) Surely all is not given away in making the golden calf, but that there is some left for the business of the tabernacle.

But surely those have cause to be most bountiful, who may truly say to him what David said humbly to the God of heaven, (1 Chron. xxix. 14 :) Of thine own have I given unto thee.

XLII.

A GOOD ANCHOR.

Isaac, ignorantly going along to be offered, propounded to his father a very hard question, (Gen. xxii. 7 :) Behold the fire and wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?

Abraham returned, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.

But was not this *gratis dictum* of Abraham? Did not he herein speak without book? where and when did God give him a promise to provide him a lamb?

Indeed he had no particular promise as to this present point, but he had a general one, (Gen. xv. 1 :) Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. Here was not only a lamb, but a flock of sheep, yea, a herd of all cattle promised unto him.

It hath kept many an honest soul in these sad times from sinking into despair, that though they had no express in Scripture that they should be freed from the particular miseries relating to this war, yet they had God's grand charter for it, (Rom. viii. 28 :) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

XLIII.

EYES BAD, NOT OBJECT.

I looked upon the wrong or back side of a piece of arras, it seemed to me as a continued nonsense, there was neither head nor foot therein, confusion itself had as much method in it; a company of thrums and threads, with many pieces and patches of several sorts, sizes, and colours, all which signified nothing to my understanding.

But then looking on the reverse, or right side thereof, all put together did spell excellent proportions and figures of men and cities. So that indeed it was a history, not wrote with a pen, but wrought with a needle.

If men look upon our late times with a mere eye of reason, they will hardly find any sense therein, such their huddle and disorder. But, alas! the wrong side is objected to our eyes, whilst the right side is presented to the high God of heaven,

who knoweth that an admirable order doth result out of this confusion, and what is presented to him at present may hereafter be so shewed to us as to convince our judgments in the truth thereof.

XLIV.

EVER, NEVER.

We read, (Psalm lv. 19,) Because they have no changes, therefore they [the wicked] fear not God.

Profaneness is a strange logician, which can collect and infer the same conclusion from contrary premises. Libertines here in England, because they have had so many changes, therefore they fear not God.

Jacob taxed Laban, (Gen. xxxi. 41,) Thou hast changed my wages ten times. I have neither list nor leisure to inquire how far our alterations of government, within these few years, fall short of that number.

But it is a sad truth, that as King Mith-

ridates is said to have fed on poison so long, that at last it became ordinary food to his body; so the multitude of changes have proved no change in many men's apprehensions, being so common and ordinary it hath made no effectual impression on their spirits. Yea, which is worse, they (as if all things came by casualty) fear God the less for these alterations.

XLV.

HEAR ME OUT.

I must confess myself to be (what I ever was) for a commonwealth: but give me leave to state the meaning of the word, seeing so much mischief hath taken covert under the homonymy thereof.

A commonwealth and a king are no more contrary than the trunk or body of a tree and the top branch thereof: there is a republic included in every monarchy.

The apostle speaketh of some Ephesians, in chap. ii. 12, aliens from the common-

wealth of Israel: that commonwealth is neither aristocratical nor democratical, but hath one sole and single person, JESUS CHRIST, the supreme head thereof.

May I live (if it may stand with God's good will and pleasure) to see England a commonwealth in such a posture, and it will be a joyful object to all who are peaceable in our nation.

XLVI.

MONS MOBILIS.

I observe that the mountains now extant do fall under a double consideration :

Those by creation, and those by inundation.

The former were of God's making, primitive mountains; when at the first his wisdom did here sink a vale, there swell a hill, so to render the prospect of the earth the more grateful by the alternate variety thereof.

The second by inundation were such as

owe their birth and being to Noah's flood : when the water, lying long in a place, (especially when driven on with the fury of the wind,) corroded a hollow, and so by consequence cast up a hill on both sides.

For such mountains of God's making, who either by their birth succeed to estates, or have acquired them by God's blessing on their lawful industry, good success may they have with their wealth and honour. And yet let not them be too proud, and think, with David, that God hath made their mountain so strong it cannot be moved ; but know themselves subject to the earthquakes of mutability as well as others.

As for the many mountains of our age, grandised by the unlawful ruin of others, swollen to a tympany by the consumption of their betters ; I wish them just as much joy with their greatness as they have right unto it.

XLVII.

NOT INVISIBLE.

A waggish scholar, (to say no worse,) standing behind the back of his tutor, conceived himself secured from his sight, and on this confidence he presumed to make antic mocks and mouths at him. Meantime, his tutor had a looking-glass (unknown to the scholar) before his face, wherein he saw all which his pupil did, and the pupil soon after felt something from his tutor.

Many things have been done in hugger-mugger in our age, profane persons conceived that their privacy protected them from divine inspection. Some say with the wicked in the psalm, Tush, shall the Lord see?

But know that (Rev. iv. 6) before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal. This is God's omniscieny. Sea, there is the largeness; crystal, there is the

pureness thereof. In this glass all persons and practices are plainly represented to God's sight, so that such who sin in secret shall suffer openly.

XLVIII.

BEST RACE.

God hath two grand attributes—first, *optimus*, that he is the best of beings; secondly, *maximus*, that he is the greatest of essences. It may justly seem strange that all men naturally are ambitious, with the apostles, (Luke xxii. 24,) to contest and contend for the latter, who shall be accounted for the greatest; outward greatness having no reality in itself, but founded merely in outward account and reputation of others.

But as for his goodness, they give it a go-by, no whit endeavouring the imitation thereof; whereas, indeed, greatness without goodness is not only useless, but also

dangerous and destructive both to him that hath it, and those who are about him.

This is a fruit of Adam's fall, and floweth from original corruption. Oh, for the future, let us change this our ambition into holy emulation, and fairly run a race of grace, who shall outstrip others in goodness!

In which race strive lawfully to gain the victory, supplant not those that run before thee, jstle not those who are even with thee, hinder not those who come behind thee.

XLIX.

FEED THE LAMBS.

What may be the cause why so much cloth so soon changeth colour? It is because it was never wet wadded, which giveth the fixation to a colour, and setteth it in the cloth.

What may be the reason why so many now-a-days are carried about with every

wind of doctrine, even to scour every point in the compass round about? Surely it is because they were never well catechised in the principles of religion.

Oh for the ancient and primitive ordinance of catechising! Every youth can preach, but he must be a man indeed who can profitably catechise.

Indeed, sermons are like whole joints for men to manage, but catechising is mince-meat, shred into questions and answers, (fit for children to eat, and easy for them to digest,) whilst the minister may also, for the edification of those of riper years, enlarge and dilate himself on both as he seeth just occasion.

L.

NAME AND THING.

There is a new word coined, within few months, called *FANATICS*, which, by the close stickling thereof, seemeth well cut out and proportioned to signify what is

meant thereby, even the sectaries of our age.

Some (most forcedly) will have it Hebrew, derived from the word to see or face one,* importing such whose piety consisteth chiefly in visage, looks, and outward shows; others will have it Greek, from *φάνομαι*, to shew and appear; their meteor piety consisting only in short blazing, the forerunner of their extinction. But most certainly the word is Latin, from *fanum*, a temple; and *fanatici* were such who, living in or attending thereabouts, were frightened with *spectra*, or apparitions, which they either saw or fancied themselves to have seen. These people, in their fits and wild raptures, pretended to strange predictions:—

ut fanaticus æstro
 Percussus bellona tuo, divinat et ingens
 Omen habes, inquit, magni clarique triumphi.
 Juv., Sat. 4.

Ut mala quem scabies et morbus regius urget,
 Aut fanaticus error. HOR., in Poet.

* פנה vidit.
 X

It will be said we have already (more than a good) many nicknames of parties, which doth but inflame the difference, and make the breach the wider betwixt us. It is confessed; but withal it is promised, that when they withdraw the thing we will subtract the name. Let them leave off their wild fancies, inconsistent with Scripture, antiquity, and reason itself, and then we will endeavour to bury the FANATIC, and all other names, in perpetual oblivion.





Nixt Contemplations on these
Times.



I.

ALL AFORE.



DEAR friend of mine (now I hope with God) was much troubled with an impertinent and importunate fellow, desirous to tell him his fortune. For things to come, said my friend, I desire not to know them, but am contented to attend Divine Providence: tell me, if you can, some remarkable passages of my life past. But the cunning man was nothing for the preter tense

(where his falsehood might be discovered,) but all for the future, counting himself therein without the reach of confutation.

There are in our age a generation of people who are the best of prophets, and worst of historians; Daniel and the Revelation are as easy to them as the ten commandments and the Lord's prayer: they pretend exactly to know the time of Christ's actual reign on earth, of the ruin of the Romish antichrist, yea, of the day of judgment itself.

But these oracles are struck quite dumb if demanded anything concerning the time past; about the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt and Babylon, the original increase and ruin of the four monarchies; of these and the like they can give no more account than the child in the cradle. They are all for things to come, but have gotten (through a great cold of ignorance) such a crick in their neck, they cannot look backward on what was behind them.

II.

TRUE TEXT.—FALSE GLOSS.

A husbandman, anabaptistically inclined, in a pleasant humour came to his minister, and told him, with much cheerfulness, that this very seed-time the words of the apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 10, were fulfilled: That he that plougheth may plough in hope.

Being desired farther to explain himself; I mean, said he, we husbandmen now plough in hope, that at harvest we shall never pay tithes, but be eased from that antichristian yoke for the time to come. It seemeth he had received such intelligence from some of his own party, who reported what they desired.

He might plough in hope to reach his nine parts, but in despair to have the tenth; especially since God hath blessed us with so wise a parliament, consisting not only of men chosen, but of persons

truly the choice of the nation, who will be as, if not more, tender of the Church's right than their own interest. They have read how Pharaoh king of Egypt, Gen. xlvii. 22, would in no case alienate the lands of the priests. The very gipsies, who generally have no good name, (condemned for crafty cheaters and cozeners,) were conscientiously precise in this particular, and they would not take away what was given to their God in his ministers.

III.

FOUL MOUTH STOPT.

Ambitious Absalom endeavoured to bring a scandal on his father's government, complaining, the petitioners who repaired to his court for justice were slighted and neglected. 2 Sam. xv. 3: See, thy matters are good and right, but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

But we know the English proverb, Ill

will never speaketh well. Let us do that justice to David, yea, to our own judgments, not to believe a graceless son and subject, against a gracious father and sovereign.

Some malecontents (Ishmaels, whose swords are against every-one) seek to bring a false report on the parliament, as if the clergy must expect no favour, not to say justice, from them, because there are none in the house elected and deputed either to speak for them or hear them speak for themselves.

Time was, say they, when the clergy was represented in the House of Lords by two archbishops, and four and twenty bishops. Time was, when the clergy had their own convocation, granting subsidies for them, so that their purses were only opened by the hands of their own proxies; but now, though our matters be good and right, there is no man deputed to hear us.

I am, and ever will be, deaf to such false and scandalous suggestions; if there be

four hundred and odd (because variously reckoned up) in the House of Parliament, I am confident we clergymen have four hundred and odd advocates for us therein. What civil Christian would not plead for a dumb man? Seeing the clergy hath lately lost their voice they so long had in parliaments, honour and honesty will engage those pious persons therein to plead for our just concernments.

IV.

ATOMS AT LAST.

I meet not, either in sacred or profane writ, with so terrible a rout as Saul gave unto the host of the Ammonites, under Nahash their king, 1 Sam. xi. 11: And it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together. And yet we have daily experience of greater scatterings and dissipations of men in their opinions.

Suppose ten men, out of pretended

purity, but real pride and peevishness, make a wilful separation from the Church of England, possibly they may continue some competent time in tolerable unity together.

Afterwards, upon a new discovery of a higher and holier way of Divine service, these ten will split asunder into five and five, and the purer moiety divide from the other, as more drossy and feculent.

Then the five, in process of time, upon the like occasion of clearer illumination, will cleave themselves into three and two.

Some short time after, the three will crumble into two and one, and the two part into one and one, till they come into the condition of the Ammonites, so scattered, that two of them were not left together.

I am sad, that I may add with too much truth, that one man will at last be divided in himself, distracted often in his judgment betwixt many opinions; that, what is reported of Tostatus, lying on his

death-bed, *in multitudine controversiarum non habuit, quod crederet*; amongst the multitude of persuasions through which he had passed, he knoweth not where to cast anchor and fix himself at the last.

V.

AN ILL MATCH.

Divine Providence is remarkable in ordering, that a fog and a tempest never did, nor can, meet together in nature. For as soon as a fog is fixed, the tempest is allayed; and as soon as a tempest doth arise, the fog is dispersed. This is a great mercy; for otherwise such small vessels as boats and barges, which want the conduct of the card and compass, would irrecoverably be lost.

How sad, then, is the condition of many sectaries in our age; which in the same instant have a fog of ignorance in their judgments, and a tempest of violence in

their affections, being too blind to go right, and yet too active to stand still.

VI.

DOWN, YET UP.

Hypocrite, in the native etymology of the word, as it is used by ancient Greek authors, signifieth such a one, *qui alienæ personæ in comædia aut tragædia est effector et repræsentator*, who in comedy or tragedy doth feign and represent the person of another; in plain English, hypocrite is neither more nor less than a stage-player.

We all know that stage-players some years since were put down by public authority; and though something may be said for them, more may be brought against them, who are rather in an employment than a vocation.

But let me safely utter my too just fears; I suspect the fire was quenched in the chimney, and in another respect scat-

tered about the house. Never more strange stage-players than now, who wear the vizards of piety and holiness, that under that covert they may more securely commit sacrilege, oppression, and what not.

In the days of Queen Elizabeth, a person of honour or worship would as patiently have digested the lie as to have been told that they did wear false pendants, or any counterfeit pearl or jewels about them, so usual in our age; yet would it were the worst piece of hypocrisy in fashion. Oh, let us all labour for integrity of heart, and either appear what we are, or be what we appear!

VII.

CALEB, ALL HEART.

I was lately satisfied in what I heard of before, by the confession of an excellent artist (the most skilful in any kind are most willing to acknowledge their igno-

rance,) that the mystery of annealing of glass, that is, baking it so that the colour may go clean through it, is now by some casualty quite lost in England, if not in Europe.

Break a piece of red glass, painted some four hundred years since, and it will be found as red in the middle as in the outsides, the colour is not only on it, but in it and through it.

Whereas, now all art can perform is only to fix the red on one side of the glass, and that ofttime so faint and fading, that within few years it falleth off, and looketh piebald to the eye.

I suspect a more important mystery is much lost in our age, viz., the transmitting of piety clean through the heart, that a man become inside and outside alike. Oh the sincerity of the ancient patriarchs, inspired prophets, holy apostles, patient martyrs, and pious fathers of the primitive church, whereas only outside sanctity is too usual in our age. Happy the man on

whose monument that character of Asa (1 Kings xv. 14) may be truly inscribed for his epitaph: Here lieth the man whose heart was perfect with the Lord all his days. Heart perfect, oh the finest of wares! All his days, oh the largest of measures!

VIII.

FIE, FOR SHAME.

Considering with myself the causes of the growth and increase of impiety and profaneness in our land, amongst others this seemeth to me not the least, viz., the late many false and erroneous impressions of the Bible. Now know, what is but carelessness in other books is impiety in setting forth of the Bible.

As Noah in all unclean creatures preserved but two of a kind, so among some hundreds in several editions we will insist only on two instances.

In the Bible printed at London, 1653,

we read, 1 Cor. vi. 9: Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God? for *not* inherit.

Now, when a reverend doctor in divinity did mildly reprove some libertines for their licentious life, they did produce this text, from the authority of this corrupt edition, in justification of their vicious and inordinate conversations.

The next instance shall be in the Bible printed at London in quarto (forbearing the name of the printer, because not done wilfully by him) in the singing psalms, Ps. lxxvii. 2—

That all the earth may know
The way to *worldly* wealth,

for *godly* wealth.

It is too probable that too many have perused and practised this erroneous impression, namely, such who, by plundering, oppression, cozening, force, and fraud, have in our age suddenly advanced vast estates.

IX.

LITTLE LOUD LIARS.

I remember one in the university gave for his question, *artis compendium artis dispendium*, the contracting of arts is the corrupting of them. Sure I am, the truth hereof appeareth too plainly in the pearl Bible printed at London, 1653, in the volume of twenty-four; for therein all the dedications and titles of David's Psalms are wholly left out, being part of the original text in Hebrew, and intimating the cause and the occasion of the writing and composing those psalms, whereby the matter may be better illustrated.

The design may be good to reduce the Bible to so small a volume, partly to make it the more portable in men's pockets, partly to bring down the price of them, that the poor people may the better compass them. But know that *vilis*, in the Latin tongue, in the first sense signifieth

what is cheap, in the second sense what is base. The small price of the Bible hath caused the small prizing of the Bible, especially since so many damnable and pernicious mistakes have escaped therein.

I cannot omit another edition in a large 12mo, making the Book of Truth to begin with a loud lie, pretending this title:—

Imprinted at London by ROBERT BARKER, &c. Anno 1638,

whereas, indeed, they were imported from Holland 1656, and that contrary to our statutes. What can be expected from so lying a frontispiece but suitable falsehoods wherewith it aboundeth.

Oh! that men in power and place would take these things into their serious considerations; a caution too late to amend what is past, but early enough for the future to prevent the importing of foreign, and misprinting of home-made Bibles.

X.

NAME GENERAL.

We read of Joseph (when advanced in the court of Pharaoh) that he called his eldest son, Gen. xli. 51, Manasseh; for God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and my father's house.

Forget his father's house! the more unnatural and undutiful son he (may some say) for his ungodly oblivion.

Oh no; Joseph never historically forgot his father's house, nor lost the affection he bare thereunto, only he forgot it both to the sad and to the vindictive part of his memory; he kept no grudge against his brethren for their cruel usage of him.

If God should be pleased to settle a general peace betwixt all parties in our land, let us all name our next born child (it will fit both sexes) Manasseh. That is, forgetting; let us forget all our plunderings, sequestrations, injuries offered unto

us, or suffered by us; the best oil is said to have no taste, that is, no tang. Though we carry a simple and single remembrance of our losses unto the grave, it being impossible to do otherwise (except we raze the faculty of memory, root and branch, out of our mind) yet let us not keep any record of them with the least reflection of revenge.

XI.

APT SCHOLARS.

Mothers generally teach their children three sins before they be full two years old.

First, pride : Point, child, where are you fine ? Where are you fine ?

Secondly, lying : It was not A that cried, it was B that cried.

Thirdly, revenge : Give me a blow, and I will beat him. Give me a blow and I will beat him.

Surely children would not be so bad,

nor so soon bad, but partly for bad precedents set before them, partly for bad precepts taught unto them.

As all three lessons have taken too deep impressions in our hearts, so chiefly the last of revenge. How many blows have been given on that account within our remembrance, and yet I can make it good, that we in our age are more bound to pardon our enemies than our fathers and grandfathers in their generation.

For charity consisteth in two main parts; *in donando et condonando*, in giving and forgiving. Give we cannot so much as those before us, our estates being so much impaired and impoverished with taxes unknown to former ages.

Seeing, therefore, one channel of charity must be the less, the stream thereof ought to run broader and deeper in the other. The less we can give, the more we should forgive: but alas! this is the worst of all, that giving goeth not so much against our covetousness, but for-

giving goeth more against our pride and ambition.

XII.

ALL WELL WEARIED.

Two gentlemen, father and son, both of great quality, lived together. The son on a time, Father, said he, I would fain be satisfied how it cometh to pass, that of such agreements which I make betwixt neighbours fallen out, not one of twenty doth last and continue; whereas not one of twenty fails wherein you are made arbitrator.

The reason, answered the other, is plain. No sooner do two friends fall out, but presently you offer yourself to compromise the difference, wherein I more commend your charity than your discretion. Whereas I always stay till the parties send or come to me, after both sides, being well wearied by spending much money in law, are mutually desirous of an agreement.

Had any endeavoured, some sixteen years since, to have advanced a firm peace betwixt the two opposite parties in our land, their success would not have answered their intentions, men's veins were then so full of blood, and purses of money.

But since there hath been so large an evacuation of both, and men begin soberly to consider that either side may (by woeful experience) make other miserable, but it is only our union can make both happy, some hope there is that a peace, if now made, may probably last and continue, which God in his mercy make us worthy of, that we may in due time receive it.

XIII.

OH, INCONSTANCY!

Learned master Camden, treating in an astrological way under what planet* Britain is seated, allegeth but one author, viz., Johannes de Muris, who placeth our

* In his Brit., p. 82.

island under Saturn, whilst he produceth three, viz., the friar Perscrutator, Esquidius, and Henry Silen, which place Britain under the moon.

It will add much (in the general apprehension of people) to the judgment of the latter, that so many changes and vicissitudes in so short a time have befell our nation; we have been in twelve years a kingdom, commonwealth, protectordom, afterwards under an army, parliament, &c. Such inconstancy doth speak us under the moon indeed; but the best is, if we be under the moon, the moon is under God, and nothing shall happen unto us but what shall be for his glory, and, we hope, for our good; and that we may in due time be under the SUN again.

XIV.

RECOVERED.

Tyrannus was a good word at first, importing no more than a king; the

pride and cruelty of some made the word to bear ill, as it doth in the modern acceptation thereof.

PROVIDENCE, as good a word as any in divinity, hath suffered so much in the modern abusing thereof, that conscientious people begin to loathe and hate it. For God's providence hath been alleged against God's precepts. King's bare word was never in our land produced against his broad seal. Yet success (an argument borrowed from the Turks) hath been pleaded as the voice of God's approbation against his positive and express will in his Word.

But God hath been pleased to vindicate his own honour, and to assert the credit of providence, which is now become a good word again. If IMPULSIVE PROVIDENCE (a new coined phrase) hath given the late army their greatness, EXPULSIVE PROVIDENCE (a newer phrase) hath given them their smallness, being now set by, laid aside as useless, and not set by, so far

from terrifying of any, by few they are regarded.

XV.

GRATITUDE.

Newcastle-on-Tyne is, without co-rival, the richest town in England, which before the conquest was usually known by the name of *Monk-Chester*.*

Exeter must be allowed of all, one of the neatest and sweetest cities of England, which anciently by the Saxons was called *Monk-Town*,† both which names are now utterly out of use, and known only to antiquaries.

God hath done great things already, whereof we rejoice, by the hand of our great general, in order to the settlement of our nation. When the same (as we hope in due time) shall be completed, not only Newcastle and Exeter shall have just cause, with comfort, to remember their

* Camden's Brit. in Northumb.

† Idem in Devon.

old names, but every county, city, market-town, parish, and village in England, may have the name of Monk put upon them. But oh, the modesty of this worthy person is as much as his merit, who hath learned from valiant, wise, and loyal Joab* to do nothing prejudicial to David, and delighteth not so much in having a great name, as in deserving it.

XVI.

THE HEIR.

I ever beheld Somersetshire, in one respect, as the most ancient and honourable shire in England. For Glastonbury in that county was the British Antioch, where the Britons were first called Christians, by the preaching of Joseph of Arimathea, though the truth of the story be much swollen by the leaven of legendary fictions.

But hereafter Somersetshire, in another respect, must be allowed the eldest county

* 2 Sam. xii. 28.

in England; as Christianity first grew there, so charity first sprang thence, in that their sober, serious, and seasonable declaration, wherein they renounce all future animosities in relation to their former sufferings.

Now, as the zeal of Achaia* provoked very many, so the example of Somersetshire hath been precedential to other counties to follow it. Kent and Essex since have done, and other shires are daily doing the same; yea, and I hope that those counties which lag the last in writing, will be as forward as the first in performing their solemn promises therein.

XVII.

SAD TRANSPOSITION.

It seemeth marvellous to me that many mechanics, (few able to read, and fewer to write their names) turning soldiers and captains in our wars, should be so soon

* 2 Cor. ix. 2.

and so much improved. They seem to me to have commenced *per saltum* in their understandings. I profess, without flouting or flattering, I have much admired with what facility and fluentness, how pertinently and properly they have expressed themselves, in language which they were never born nor bred to, but have industriously acquired by conversing with their betters.

What a shame would it be, if such who have been of genteel extraction, and have had liberal education, should (as if it were by exchange of souls) relapse into ignorance and barbarism.

What an ignominy would it be for them to be buried in idleness, and in the moderate pursuit of pleasures and vicious courses, till they besot their understandings, when they see soldiers arrived at such an improvement, who were bred tailors, shoemakers, cobblers, &c.

Not that I write this (God knoweth my heart) in disgrace of them, because they

were bred in so mean callings, which are both honest in themselves and useful in the commonwealth; yea, I am so far from thinking ill of them for being bred in so poor trades, that I should think better of them for returning unto them again.

XVIII.

BIRD IN THE BREAST.

I saw two men fighting together, till a third, casually passing by, interposed himself to part them; the blows of the one fell on his face, of the other on his back, of both on his body, being the screen betwixt the fiery anger of the two fighters. Some of the beholders laughed at him, as well enough served for meddling with matters which belonged not to him.

Others pitied him, conceiving every man concerned to prevent bloodshed betwixt neighbours, and Christianity itself was commission enough to interest him therein.

However, this is the sad fate which at-

tended all moderate persons, which will mediate betwixt opposite parties. They may complain with David, they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my good will. Yet let not such hereby be disheartened, but know that (besides the reward in heaven) the very work of moderation is the wages of moderation. For it carrieth with it a marvellous contentment in his conscience who hath endeavoured his utmost in order to unity, though unhappy in his success.

XIX.

FAIR HOPES.

A traveller who had been newly robbed inquired of the first gentleman he met, who also was in a melancholy humour (a cause having lately gone against him,) where he might find a justice of peace, to whom the gentleman replied : You ask for two things together, which singly and severally are not to be had. I neither know

where JUSTICE is, nor yet where PEACE is to be found.

Let us not make the condition of our land worse than it was; Westminster Hall was ever open, though the proceedings of justice therein were much interrupted and obstructed with military impressions. Peace, we confess, hath been a stranger unto us a long time, heart-burnings remaining when house-burnings are quenched; but now, blessed be God, we are in a fair probability of recovering both, if our sins and ingratitude blast not our most hopeful expectations.

XX.

RIDDLE UNRIDDED.

We read, 1 Sam. xv. 11, that when Absalom aspired to his father's kingdom, with him went two hundred men out of Jerusalem that were called, and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not anything. If any have so little charity as to

call these persons TRAITORS, I will have so much confidence as to term them LOYAL TRAITORS, and (God willing) justify the seeming contradiction.

For they lodged not in their hearts the least disloyal thought against the person and power of King David. But, alas, when these two hundred were mixed among two thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand of active and designing traitors; these poor men might, in the violent multitude, be hurried on, not only beyond their intentions, but even against their resolutions.

Such as are sensible with sorrow that their well-intending simplicity hath been imposed on, abused, and deluded by the subtlety of others, may comfort and content themselves in the sincerity of their own souls; God, no doubt, hath already forgiven them, and therefore men ought to revoke their uncharitable censures of them. And yet divine justice will have its full tale of intended stripes, taking so many off

from the back of the deceived, and laying them on the shoulders of the deceivers.

XXI.

NO RECORD TO REMAIN.

I never did read, nor can learn from any, that ever Queen Elizabeth had any ship-royal, which in the name thereof carried the memorial of any particular conquest she got either by land or by water. Yet was she as victorious as any prince in her age, and (which is mainly material) her conquests were mostly achieved against foreign enemies.

The ships of her navy had only honest and wholesome names, the *Endeavour*, the *Bonaventure*, the *Return*, the *Unity*, &c.

Some of our modern ships carry a very great burthen in their names; I mean the memorial of some fatal fights in the civil wars in our own nation, and the conquerors ought not to take much joy, as the

conquered must take grief in the remembrance thereof.

I am utterly against the re-baptising of Christians, but I am for the re-dipping of ships, that not only some inoffensive, but ingratiating names may be put upon them; the *Unity*, the *Reconciliation*, the *Agreement*, the *Concord*, and healing titles, (I speak more like a bookman than a sea-man,) and others to that purpose.

XXII.

ALL FOR THE PRESENT.

There is a pernicious humour, of a catching nature, wherewith the mouths of many, and hearts of more, are infected. Some there are that are so covetous to see the settlement of Church and State according to their own desires, that if it be not done in our days, say they, we care not whether it be done at all or no.

Such men's souls live in a lane, having weak heads and narrow hearts, their faith

being little, and charity less, being all for themselves, and nothing for posterity. These men, living in India, would prove ill commonwealth's-men, and would lay no foundation for porcelain or china dishes, because despairing to reap benefit thereby, as not ripened to perfection in a hundred years.

Oh! give me that good man's gracious temper, who earnestly desired the prosperity of the Church, whatsoever became of himself, whose verses I will offer to translate:—

*"Seu me terra tegit, seu vastum contegit æquor;
Exoptata piis sæcula fausta precor."*

"Buried in earth, or drown'd in th' main,
Eat up by worms or fishes;
I pray the pious may obtain,
For happy times, their wishes."

And if we ourselves, with aged Barzillai,* be superannuated to behold the happy establishment of Church and State, may we, dying in faith,† though not having received the promises, bequeath the

* 2 Sam. xix. 32.

† Heb. xi. 13.

certain reversions of our Chimhams, I mean the next generation which shall rise up after us.

XXIII.

COURTESY GAINETH.

I have heard the royal party (would I could say without any cause) complained of, that they have not charity enough for converts, who came off unto them from the opposite side; who, though they express a sense of and sorrow for their mistakes, and have given testimony, though perchance not so plain and public as others expected, of their sincerity, yet still they are suspected as unsound; and such as frown not on, look but asquint at them.

This hath done much mischief, and retarded the return of many to their side; for had these their van-couriers been but kindly entertained, possibly ere now their whole army had come over unto us; which

now are disheartened by the cold welcome of these converts.

Let this fault be mended for the future, that such proselytes may meet with nothing to discourage, all things to comfort and content them.

Let us give them not only the right hand of fellowship, but even the upper hand of superiority. One asked a mother who had brought up many children to a marriageable age what arts she used to breed up so numerous an issue: "None other," said she, "save only, I always made the most of the youngest." Let the Benjamins ever be darlings, and the last born, whose eyes were newest opened with the sight of their errors, be treated with the greatest affection.

XXIV.

MODERATION.

Arthur Plantagenet Viscount Lisle, natural son to King Edward the Fourth, and

(which is the greatest honour to his memory) direct ancestor, in the fifth degree, to the right honourable and most renowned Lord General George Monk, was, for a fault of his servant's (intending to betray Calais to the king of France) committed to the tower by King Henry the Eighth, where, well knowing the fury and fierceness of that king, he daily expected death.

But the innocence of this lord appearing after much search, the king sent him a rich ring off his own finger, with so comfortable words that, at the hearing thereof, a sudden joy overcharged his heart, whereof he died that night;* so fatal was not only the anger but the love of that king.

England for this many years hath been in a languishing condition, whose case hath been so much the sadder than this lord's was, because conscious of a great guilt, whereby she hath justly incurred God's displeasure. If God of his good-

* Speed, Chron., p. 692.

ness should be pleased to restore her to his favour, may he also give her moderation safely to digest and concoct her own happiness, that she may not run from one extreme to another, and excessive joy prove more destructive unto her than grief hath been hitherto.

XXV.

PREPARATIVE.

Twilight is a great blessing of God to mankind: for, should our eyes be instantly posted out of darkness into light, out of midnight into morning, so sudden a surprisal would blind us. God, therefore, of his goodness hath made the intermediate twilight to prepare our eyes for the reception of the light.

Such is his dealing with our English nation. We were lately in the midnight of misery. It was questionable whether the law should first draw up the will and testament of dying divinity, or divinity

first make a funeral sermon for expiring law. Violence stood ready to invade our property, heresies and schisms to oppress religion.

Blessed be God, we are now brought into a better condition, yea, we are past the equilibrium; the beam beginning to break on the better side, and our hopes to have the mastery of our despairs. God grant this twilight may prove *crepusculum matutinum*, forerunning the rising of the sun, and increase of our happiness.

XXVI.

REVENGE WITH A WITNESS.

Frederic the Second,* emperor of Germany, being at Pisa in Italy, and distressed for want of money to pay his army, sent for Petrus de Vineis, an able man, who formerly had been his secretary, but whose eyes he had caused to be bored out for some misdemeanour.

* Swinger's Theat., vol. vii. lib. 5, p. 1959, sub titulo *Ultionis*.

Being demanded of the emperor which way he might most speedily and safely (as to outward danger) recruit his treasury, his secretary gave him counsel to seize on the plate of all the churches and monasteries of that city, which he did accordingly, and amongst the rest he took *zonam auream*, or the golden girdle, out of one church, of inestimable value.

This blind secretary, returning home to his wife, told her, "Now I am even with the emperor for putting out my eyes, having put him on such a project which I hope he will pursue to his own destruction. He hath made me a spectacle to men, but I have made him a monster unto God."

Let such who are concerned herein see what success the emperor had in this his expedition founded on sacrilege, and the longer they look thereon, the worse I am sure they will like it, to bar farther application.

XXVII.

A GNAT, NO GNAT.

One, needlessly precise, took causeless exception at a gentleman for using the word *IN TROTH* in his discourse, as if it had been a kind of an oath. The gentleman pleaded for himself, that *IN TRUTH* was a word inoffensive, even in his judgment who accused him.

Secondly, that he was born far north, where their broad and Doric dialect pronounced *TRUTH*, *TROTH*, and he did humbly conceive the tone of the tongue was no fault of the heart.

Lastly, he alleged the twenty-fifth psalm, as it is translated in metre :

"To them that keep his testament,
The witness of his troth."

And thus at last, with much ado, his seeming fault was remitted.

I am afraid if one should declare for troth and peace, and not for truth and

peace, it would occasion some offence; however, rather than it should make any difference, the former will be as acceptable to the north of Trent, as the latter will please all good people south thereof.

XXVIII.

SILENCE AWHILE.

Had not mine eyes, as any other man's may, read it in the printed proclamations of King Edward the Sixth, (when the pulpits, generally popish, sounded the alarm to Kett's rebellion, and the Devonshire commotion,) I would not have believed what followeth :

2 *Edw. VI. Sept. 13.*

“ By these presents, Wee inhibit generally all manner of Preachers whatsoever they be, to preach in this meane space, to the intent that the whole Clergy might apply themselves in prayer to Almighty*

* This lasted in full force but for some few weeks.

God, for the better atchieving of the same most Godlie intent, and purpose of Reformation.”

What hurt were it, if in this juncture of time all our preaching were turned into praying for one month together, that God would settle a happy peace in this nation ?

However, if this be offensive to any, and giveth cause of distaste, the second motion may be embraced, that for a year, at least, all pulpits may be silent as to any part of differences relating to our times, and only deliver what belongeth to faith and good works.

XXIX.

SEND HUMILITY.

I do not remember that the word INFINITE is in Scripture attributed to any creature, save to the city of Nineveh, Nahum iii. 9 : Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite.

But what is now become of Nineveh? It is even buried in its own ruins, and may have this epitaph upon it:—

HIC JACET FINIS INFINITI.

Here lieth the END of what was ENDLESS.

He who beheld the multitude of actors and beholders at the mustering in Hyde Park on the twenty-fourth of April last, will say that there was an infinite number of people therein. Some would hardly believe that the whole nation could afford so many as the city of London alone did then produce.

My prayer shall ever be, that this great city may be kept either in the wholesome ignorance, or humble knowledge of its own strength, lest the people numberless prove masterless therein. And let them remember (God forefend the parallel) what is become of great Nineveh at this day, annihilated for the pride thereof!

XXX.

RATHER FOLD OVER THAN FALLSHORT.

Solomon's temple was seven years in building, 1 Kings vi. 38. And such who seriously consider the magnificence thereof, will more wonder that it was done so soon than doing so long.

Now, had Solomon at the beginning of this building abolished the tabernacle made by Moses, because too mean and little for so mighty and so numerous a nation, God had been seven years without any place of public service.

But that wise prince continued the tabernacle to all uses and purposes until the temple was finished, and then, 1 Kings viii. 4, They brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up. And as it followeth afterwards, ver. 6, They

brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house. And certainly all the rest of the tabernacle, consisting of such materials as might be taken down and kept in chests and coffers, were deposited in the temple, though it may be no use was made thereof.

It had been well if, before the old government of the church was taken down, a new one had first been settled. Yea, rather let God have two houses together than none at all; lest piety be starved to death with cold, by lying out of doors in the interval betwixt the demolishing of an old and the erecting of a new church discipline.

XXXI.

NO MAN'S WORK.

Christ, when on earth, cured many a spot, especially of leprosy, but never

smoothed any wrinkle; never made any old man young again.

But in heaven he will do both, Eph. v. 27: When he shall present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Triumphant perfection is not to be hoped for in the militant church; there will be in it many spots and wrinkles as long as it consisteth of sinful mortal men, the members thereof: it is Christ's work, not man's work, to make a perfect reformation.

Such, therefore, are no good politicians who will make a sore to mend a spot, cause a wound to plain a wrinkle, do a great and certain mischief, when a small and uncertain benefit will thereby redound.

XXXII.

THREE MAKE UP ONE.

Young King Jehoash had only a lease of piety, and not for his own but his uncle's life, 2 Kings xii. 2: He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all his days, wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

Jehu was good in the midst of his life, and a zealous reformer to the utter abolishing of Baal out of Israel; but in his old age, 2 Kings x. 31, He returned to the politic sins of Jeroboam, worshipping the calves in Dan and Bethel.

Manasseh was bad in the beginning and middle of his life, filling Jerusalem with idolatry; only towards the end thereof, when carried into a strange land,* he came home to himself, and destroyed the profane altars he had erected.

These three put together make one per-

* 2 Chron. xxxiii. 15.

fect servant of God. Take the morning and rise with Jehoash, the noon and shine with Jehu, the night and set with Manasseh. Begin with youth-Jehoash, continue with man-Jehu, conclude with old-man-Manasseh, and all put together will spell one good Christian, yea, one good perfect reformer.

XXXIII.

SERO, SED SERIO.

Nebuchadnezzar observed three gradations in plundering the temple; first, he mannerly sipped and took but a taste of the wealth thereof, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7: He carried off the vessels of the house of the Lord to Babylon.

Next, he mended his draught, and drank very deep, ver. 10: When the year was expired, Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought Jehoiachin to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the Lord.

Lastly, he emptied the cup, not leaving

one drop behind, ver. 18: And all the vessels of the house of the Lord, great and small, brought he to Babylon.

It was the mercy of God to allow his people space to repent; had they made their seasonable composition with God after the first inroad, they had prevented the second: if after the second, they had prevented the last and final destruction.

God hath suffered our civil wars some sixteen years since, first to taste of the wealth of our nation; and we met not God with suitable humiliation. His justice then went farther, and the sword took the goodly vessels, the gallantry and gaiety of England from us; 1. Our massy plate; 2. Pleasant pictures; 3. Precious jewels; 4. Rare libraries; and 5. Magnificent palaces [Holdenby, Theobalds, Richmond], carrying majesty in their structure; 1. Melted down; 2. Sold; 3. Lost, or drowned; 4. Transported; 5. Levelled to the ground.

God grant that we may sue out our

pardon by serious repentance, before all the vessels, great and small, be taken away in a renewed war, that the remnant of wealth which is left in the land may be continued therein.

XXXIV.

BY DEGREES.

We read that the nails in the holy of holies, 2 Chron. iii. 8 and 9, were of fine gold. Hence ariseth a question, how such nails could be useful? pure gold being so flexible that a nail made thereof will bow and not drive.

Now, I was present at the debate hereof, betwixt the best working-goldsmiths in London, where, among many other ingenious answers, this carried away the credit for the greatest probability thereof—viz., that they were screw-nails, which had holes prepared for their reception, and so were wound in by degrees.

God's work must not be done lazily, but

leisurely : haste maketh waste in this kind. In reformations of great importance, the violent driving in of the nail will either break the head, or bow the point thereof, or rive and split that which should be fastened therewith.

That may insensibly be screwed which cannot suddenly be knocked into people. Fair and softly goeth far, but, alas! we have too many fiery spirits, who, with Jehu, drive on so furiously they will overturn all in church and state, if their fierceness be not seasonably retrenched.

XXXV.

GOOD AUGURY.

I was much affected with reading that distich in Ovid, as having somewhat extraordinary therein :—

*“ Tarpeia quondam prædixit ab ilice cornix,
Est, bene non potuit dicere, dixit, erit.”*

“ The crow sometimes did sit and SPELL,*
On top of Tarpie Hall ;
She could not say ALL’S WELL, ALL’S WELL,
But said, IT SHALL, IT SHALL.”

* To foretell ; hence Spelman.

But what! do I listen to the language of the crow, whose black colour hath a cast of hell therein, in superstitious soothsaying? Let us hearken to what the dove of the Holy Spirit saith, promising God's servants, though the present times be bad, the future will be better, Psalm xxxvii. 11: The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

XXXVI.

SUBTRACT NOT, BUT ADD.

A covetous courtier complained to King Edward the Sixth, of Christ College in Cambridge, that it was a superstitious foundation, consisting of a master and twelve fellows, in imitation of Christ and his twelve apostles. He advised the king also to take away one or two fellowships, so to discompose that superstitious number.

Oh no, said the king, I have a better

way than that to mar their conceit, I will add a thirteenth fellowship unto them; which he did accordingly, and so it remaineth to this day.

Well fare their hearts who will not only wear out their shoes, but also their feet in God's service, and yet gain not a shoe-latchet thereby.

When our Saviour drove the sheep and oxen out of the temple, he did not drive them into his own pasture, nor swept the coin into his own pockets when he overturned the tables of the money-changers. But we have in our days many who are forward to offer to God such zeal which not only cost them nothing, but wherewith they have gained great estates.

XXXVII.

SEND SUCH MUSIC.

We read, 1 Kings viii. 55, that Solomon, when he had ended his excellent prayer, he blessed the people. But was

not this invading the sacerdotal function ? seeing it was not crown work, but mitre work to do it.*

No, surely, Solomon's act therein was lawful and laudable, there being a threefold blessing :—

1. Imperative ; so God only blessed his people who commandeth deliverances for Israel.

2. Indicative ; solemnly to declare God's blessing to, and put his name upon the people, and this was the priest's work.

3. Optative ; wishing and desiring God's blessing on the people, and this was done by Solomon.

Yea, it is remarkable that, in the same chapter, ver. 66, the people blessed the king. Oh happy reciprocation betwixt them ! when the king blesseth his people, if his words be rightly understood, all may be well. But when a people blesseth their king, all is well.

* Num. vi. 23.

XXXVIII.

BY HOOK AND BY CROOK.

Marvellous was the confidence of those merchants, (James iv. 13 :) Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get again.

What false heraldry have we here, presumption on presumption! What insurance-office had they been at to secure their lives for a twelvemonth!

But, this being granted, how could they certainly promise themselves that they this year should get gain, except they had surely known what would have been dear the next year? Merchandising is a ticklish matter, seeing many buy and sell, and live by the loss.

Either, then, trading in those times was quicker and better than in ours, or (which is most probable) they were all resolved on the point, to cheat, cozen, lie, swear and

foreswear, and to gain by what means soever.

Our age and land affordeth many of their temper, and of such St Paul speaketh, (1 Tim. vi. 9,) They will be rich. Will, whether God will or will not; will, though it cost them the forfeiture of their conscience to compass their designs.

XXXIX.

WITHOUT CARE NO CURE.

A woman, when newly delivered of a child, her pain is ended, her peril is but new begun; a little distemper in diet, or a small cold taken, may inflame her into a fever, and endanger her life. Wherefore, when the welfare of such a person is inquired after, this answer-general is returned, She is well for one in her condition; the third, fifth, and ninth days (all critical) must be expected, till which time *bene-male* is all the health which the Latin tongue will allow her.

England is this green woman, lately brought to bed of a long-expected child, LIBERTY. Many wise men suspected that she would have died in travail, and both child and mother miscarry. But God be thanked for a good midwife, who would not prevent, but attend the date of nature.

However, all, yea, most of the danger, is not yet past. Numerous is the multitude of malcontents, and many difficulties must be encountered before our peace can be settled.

God grant the woman be not wilful in fits of her distemper, to be ordered by the discretion of her nurses, which now in parliament most carefully attend her recovery.

XL.

KEEP YOUR CASTLE.

Soon after the king's death I preached in a church near London, and a person then in great power, now levelled with his

fellows, was present at my sermon. Now, I had this passage in my prayer, God in his due time settle our nation on the true foundation thereof.

The [then] great man demanded of me, what I meant by true foundation. I answered that I was no lawyer nor statesman, and therefore skill in such matters was not to be expected from me.

He pressed me farther to express myself, whether thereby I did not intend the king, lords, and commons.

I returned, that it was a part of my prayer to God, who had more knowledge than I had ignorance in all things, that he knew what was the true foundation, and I remitted all to his wisdom and goodness.

When men come with nets in their ears it is good for the preacher to have neither fish nor fowl in his tongue. But, blessed be God, now we need not lie at so close a guard. Let the gentleman now know, that what he suspected I then intended in

my words, and let him make what improvement he pleaseth thereof.

XLI.

TOO MUCH BENEATH.

King Henry the Seventh was much troubled (as he was wont to say) with idols, scenecal royalettes, poor, petty, pitiful persons, who pretended themselves princes.

One of these was called Lambert Simnel, whom the king at last, with much care and cost, some expense of blood, but more of money, reduced into his power, and got his person into his possession. Then, instead of other punishment, he made him a turn-broach, and afterwards (on his peaceable behaviour) he was preferred one of the king's under-falconers,* and, as one tartly said, a fit place for the buzzard, to keep hawks, who would have been an eagle.

* Lord Bacon, in the Life of King Henry VII.

The king perceived that this Lambert was no daring, dangerous, and designing person, and therefore he would not make him, who was contemptible in himself, considerable for any noble punishment imposed upon him.

Royal revenge will not stoop to a low object; some malefactors are too mean to be made public examples. Let them live, that the pointing of people's fingers may be so many arrows to pierce them. See, there goes ingratitude to his master; there walks, &c.

Such a life will smart as death, and such a death may be sanctified for life unto them—I mean, may occasion their serious sorrow and cordial repentance, whereby God's pardon and their eternal salvation may be obtained, which ought to be the desire of all good Christians, as well for others as themselves.

XLII.

PATIENCE AWHILE.

The soldiers asked of John the Baptist, (Luke iii. 14,) &c., And what shall we do? Every man ought (not curiously to inquire into the duty of others, but) to attend his own concernments. The Baptist returned, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

Good counsel to the soldiers of this age. Do violence to no man, plunder no man, accuse no man falsely.

Make no men malignants by wrongful information, and be content with your wages.

But I have heard some of the most moderate of the soldiers, not without cause, to complain: he is a mutineer indeed who will not be content with his wages. But alas! we must be content without our wages; having so much of our

arrears due unto us, this is a hard chapter indeed. And John Baptist himself, though feeding hardly on locusts and wild honey, could not live without any food.

Indeed, their case is to be pitied, and yet such as are ingenuous amongst them will be persuaded to have patience but awhile, the nation being now in fermentation, and tending to a consistency. The wisdom of the parliament is such, they will find out the most speedy and easy means to pay them, and such their justice, no intent is there to defraud them of a farthing, whatsoever ill-affected malcontents may suggest to the contrary.

XLIII.

IN THE MIDDLE.

God in his providence fixed my nativity in a remarkable place.

I was born at Aldwinkle in Northamptonshire, where my father was the painful preacher of St Peter's. This village

was distanced one good mile west from Achurch, where Mr Brown, founder of the Brownists, did dwell, whom, out of curiosity, when a youth, I often visited.

It was likewise a mile and a half distant east from Lavenden, where Francis Tresham, esquire, so active in the Gunpowder Treason, had a large demesne and ancient habitation.

My nativity may mind me of moderation, whose cradle was rocked betwixt two rocks. Now, seeing I was never such a churl as to desire to eat my morsel alone, let such who like my prayer join with me therein.

God grant we may hit the golden mean, and endeavour to avoid all extremes: the fanatic Anabaptist on the one side, and the fiery zeal of the Jesuit on the other, that so we may be true Protestants, or, which is a far better name, real Christians indeed.

XLIV.

AMENDING.

All generally hate a sluttish house, wherein nastiness hath not only taken livery and seizin, but also hath been a long time in the peaceable possession thereof.

However, reasonable men will be contented with a house belittered with straw, and will dispense with dust itself, whilst the house is sweeping, because it hath uncleanness in order to cleanness.

Many things in England are out of joint for the present, and a strange confusion there is in Church and State; but let this comfort us, we trust it is confusion in tendency to order. And, therefore, let us for a time more patiently comport therewith.

XLV.

TOO MUCH TRUTH.

Some, perchance, will smile, though I

am sure all should sigh, at the following story.

A minister of these times sharply chid one of his parish for having a base child, and told him, he must take order for the keeping thereof.

“Why, sir,” answered the man, “I conceive it more reasonable that you should maintain it. For I am not book-learned, and ken not a letter in the Bible; yea, I have been your parishioner this seven years, present every Lord’s day at the church, yet did I never there hear you read the ten commandments; I never heard that precept read, Thou shalt not commit adultery. Probably, had you told me my duty, I had not committed this folly.”

It is an abominable shame, and a crying sin of this land, that poor people hear not in their churches the sum of what they should pray for, believe, and practise; many mock-ministers having banished out of divine service the use of the Lord’s prayer, creed, and ten commandments.

XLVI.

AS IT WAS.

Some alive will be deposed for the truth of this strange accident, though I forbear the naming of place or persons.

A careless maid, which attended a gentleman's child, fell asleep whilst the rest of the family were at church; an ape, taking the child out of the cradle, carried it to the roof of the house, and there (according to his rude manner) fell a dancing and dandling thereof, down head, up heels, as it happened.

The father of the child, returning with his family from the church, commented with his own eyes on his child's sad condition. Bemoan he might, help it he could not. Dangerous to shoot the ape where the bullet might hit the babe; all fall to their prayers as their last and best refuge, that the innocent child (whose precipice they suspected) might be preserved.

But when the ape was well wearied with its own activity, he fairly went down, and formally laid the child where he found it, in the cradle.

Fanatics have pleased their fancies these late years with turning and tossing and tumbling of religion, upward and downward, and backward and forward; they have cast and contrived it into a hundred antic postures of their own imagining. However, it is now to be hoped, that after they have tired themselves out with doing of nothing, but only trying and tampering this and that way to no purpose, they may at last return and leave religion in the same condition wherein they found it.

XLVII.

NO SO, LONG.

Solomon was the riddle of the world, being the richest and poorest of princes.

Richest, for once in three years the land

of Ophir sailed to Jerusalem, and caused such plenty of gold therein.

Poorest, as appeareth by his imposing so intolerable taxes on his subjects, the refusal of the mitigation whereof caused the defection of the ten tribes from the house of David.

But how came Solomon to be so much behind hand? Some I know score it on the account of his building of the temple, as if so magnificent a structure had impaired and exhausted his estate.

But in very deed, it was his keeping of seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, and his concubines in all probability more expensive than his wives, (as the thief in the candle wasteth more wax than the wick thereof.) All these had their several courts, which must needs amount to a vast expense.

How cometh the great treasure of our land to be low, and the debts thereof so high? Surely it is not by building of churches, all the world will be her compur-

gators therein. It is rather because we maintain (and must for a time for our safety) such a numerous army of soldiers.

Well it had been, both for the profit, credit, and conscience of Solomon, to have reduced his wives to a smaller number, as we hope in due time our standing army shall be epitomised to a more moderate proportion.

XLVIII.

THANK GOD.

A nuncio of the Pope's was treated at Sienna, by a prime person, with a great feast. It happened there was present thereat a syndick of the city, (being a magistrate, parallel in his place to one of our aldermen,) who, as full of words as empty of wit, engrossed all the discourse at the table to himself, who might with as good manners have eaten all the meat at the supper.

The entertainer, sorry to see him dis-

cover so much weakness to the disgrace of himself, endeavoured to stop the superfluity of his talk. All in vain. The leaks in a rotten ship might sooner be stanch'd. At last, to excuse the matter (as well as he might) he told the nuncio privately, You, I am sure, have some weak men at Rome, as well as we have at Sienna. We have so, said the nuncio, but we make them no syndicks.

It cannot be otherwise, but that in so spacious a land, so numerous a people as England is, we must have many weak men, and some of them of great wealth and estates. Yea, such who are not only guilty of plain and simple ignorance, but of ignorance guarded and embrodered with their own conceitedness. But, blessed be God, they are not chosen parliament-men; the diffusive nation was never more careful in their elections of their representatives.

God grant, that as the several days' works in the creation were singly by God pronounced GOOD, but the last day's work

(being the collection and complication of them all) VERY GOOD,* so these persons, good as single instruments, may be best in a consort as met together.

XLIX.

CAN GOOD COME FROM IGNORANCE?

King James was no less dexterous at, than desirous of, the discovery of such who belied the father of lies, and falsely pretended themselves possessed with a devil.

Now a maid dissembled such a possession, and for the better colour thereof, when the first verses of the Gospel of St John were read in her hearing, she would fall into strange fits of fuming and foaming to the amazement of the beholders.

But when the king caused one of his chaplains to read the same in the original, the same maid (possessed it seems with an English devil, who understood not a word

* Gen. i. 31.

of Greek) was tame and quiet, without any impression upon her.

I know a factious parish, wherein, if the minister in his pulpit had but named the word KINGDOM, the people would have been ready to have petitioned against him for a malignant. But as for REALM, the same in French, he might safely use it in his sermons as oft as he pleased. Ignorance, which generally inflameth, sometimes, by good hap, abateth men's malice.

The best is, that now one may, without danger, use either word, seeing England was a kingdom a thousand years ago, and may be one (if the world last so long) a thousand years hereafter.

L.

TRUSTING MAKETH ONE TRUSTY.

Charles the Second,* king of the Scots,

* From the mouth of my worthy friend, now gone to God, D. Clare, chaplain then to his Highness.

when a child, was much troubled with a weakness in his legs, and was appointed to wear steel boots for the strengthening of them.

The weight of these so clogged the child, that he enjoyed not himself in any degree, but moaned himself, fasting at feasts; yea, his very play being work unto him, he may be said to be a prisoner in his own palace.

It happened that an aged rocker, which waited on him, took the steel boots from his legs, and cast them in a place where it was hard to find them there, and impossible to fetch them thence, promising the countess of Dorset (governess of the prince) that if any anger arised thereof, she would take all the blame on herself.

Not long after, the king, coming into the nursery, and beholding the boots taken from his legs, was offended thereat, demanding, in some anger, who had done it.

“It was I, sir,” said the rocker, “who

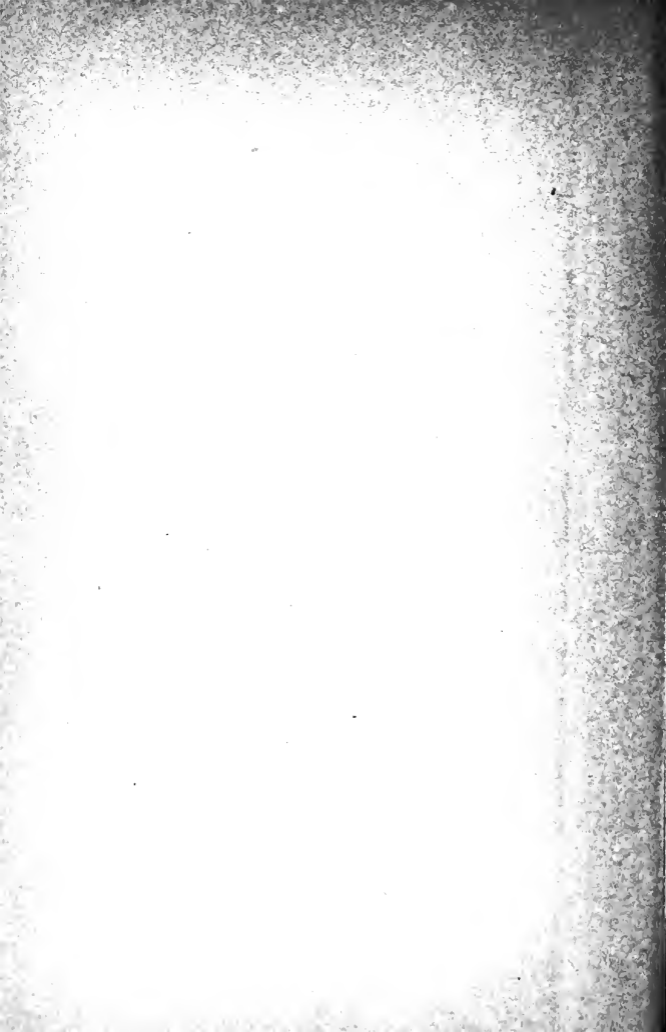
had the honour, some thirty years since, to attend on your Highness in your infancy, when you had the same infirmity wherewith now the prince, your very own son, is troubled. And then the lady Cary (afterwards countess of Monmouth) commanded your steel boots to be taken off, who, blessed be God, since have gathered strength, and arrived at a good stature.”

The nation is too noble, when his Majesty (who hitherto hath had a short course, but a long pilgrimage) shall return from foreign parts, to impose any other steel boots upon him than the observing the laws of the land, (which are his own stockings,) that so with joy and comfort he may enter on what was his own inheritance.

But I remember, when Luther began first to mislike some errors in the Romish Church, and complained thereof to Staupitius his confessor, he used to say unto him, *Abi in cellam et ora*, Get you gone into your cell and pray. So will I do,

(who have now done,) and leave the managing of the rest to those to whom it is most proper to advance God's glory and their country's good. Amen.







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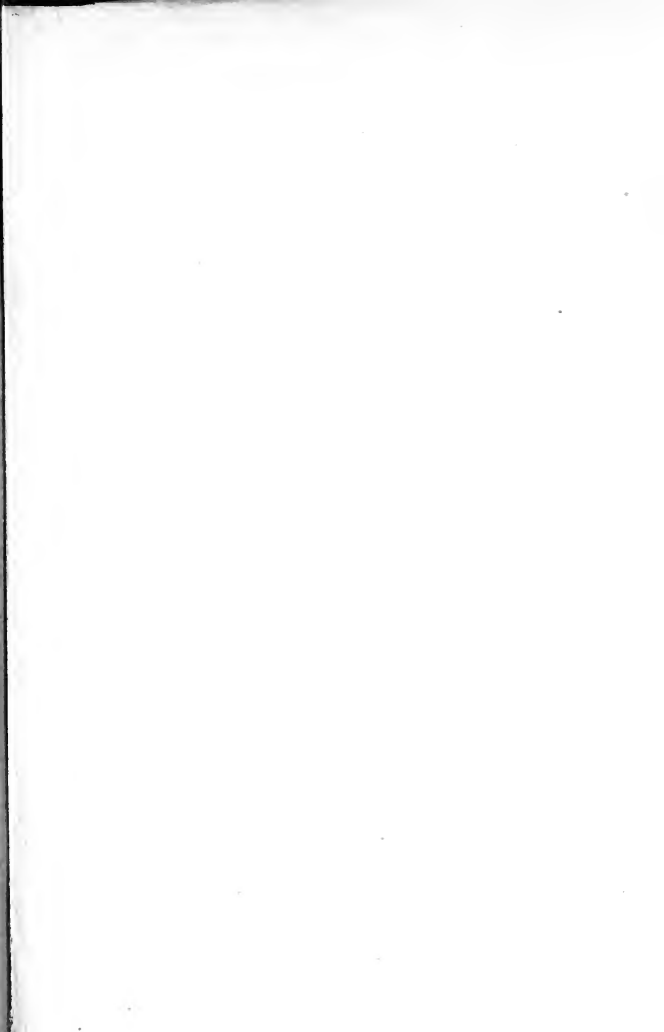
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